


ENGLISH 33

Module 6

*A Different World:
The Novel*





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English 33

Module 6

A DIFFERENT WORLD: THE NOVEL



English 33
Student Module Booklet
Module 6
A Different World: The Novel
Alberta Distance Learning Centre
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This document is intended for	
Students	✓
Teachers (English 33)	✓
Administrators	
Parents	
General Public	
Other	



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Welcome to Module 6!

We hope you'll enjoy your study of *A Different World: The Novel*.

We've included a prerecorded audiocassette with this module. The cassette will help you work through the material and it will enhance your listening skills.

Whenever you see this icon,



turn on your tape and listen.

Because there are no response lines provided in the Student Module Booklets of this course, you'll need a notebook or lined paper to respond to questions, complete charts, and answer questionnaires.

It's important to keep your lined paper handy as you work through the material and to keep your responses together in a notebook or binder for review purposes later. Read all of the questions carefully, and respond to them as completely as possible. Then compare your responses with the ones supplied in the Appendix.

You'll be asked to keep some of your personal responses in a separate folder or booklet—your journal. You learned what a journal is and how to use it in Module 1.

Remember to read carefully and work through all of the activities in each section before attempting the assignment for that section. This strategy will help you to achieve better success in your studies.

Take the time to do your best.

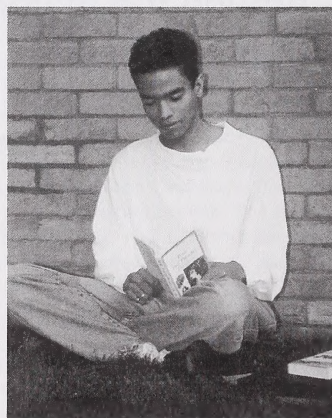
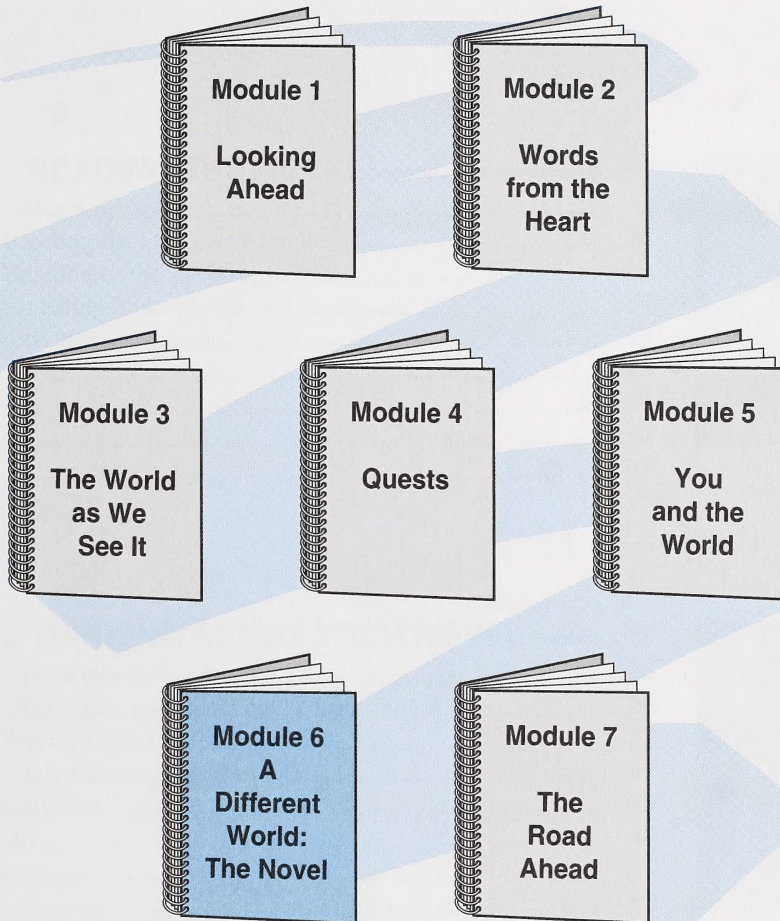


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COURSE OVERVIEW

English 33 contains seven modules.



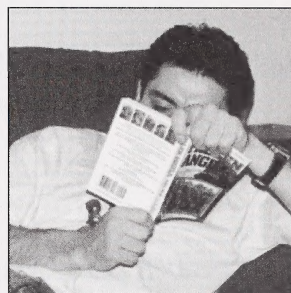
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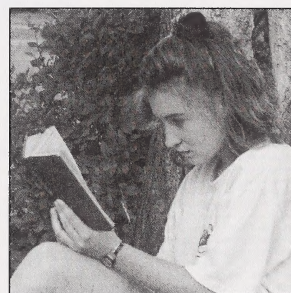
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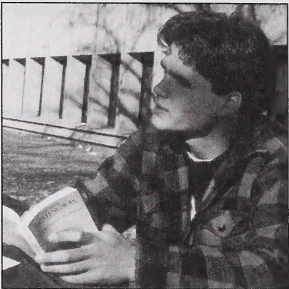


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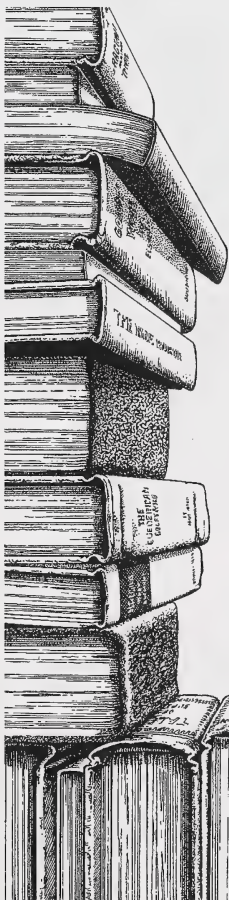
MODULE OVERVIEW



A novel is a mirror that strolls along a highway. Now it reflects the blue of the skies, now the mud puddles underfoot.

So wrote Stendhal, one of the leading French novelists of the nineteenth century. As the quotation suggests, a novel can be just about anything—as long as it portrays life honestly, with its beauty and with its warts intact.

In this module, you'll be reading a novel that you've selected from a list of seven novels authorized by Alberta Education for English 33 students. The list includes a great deal of variety. One thing they all have in common is that they're novels that entertain their readers while communicating a great deal about life and human nature. Whichever novel you select should live up to Stendhal's description.



Module 6

A Different World: The Novel

Section 1: Reading the Novel

Section 2: Thinking About Your Novel

Section 3: The Novel—A Final Look



Evaluation

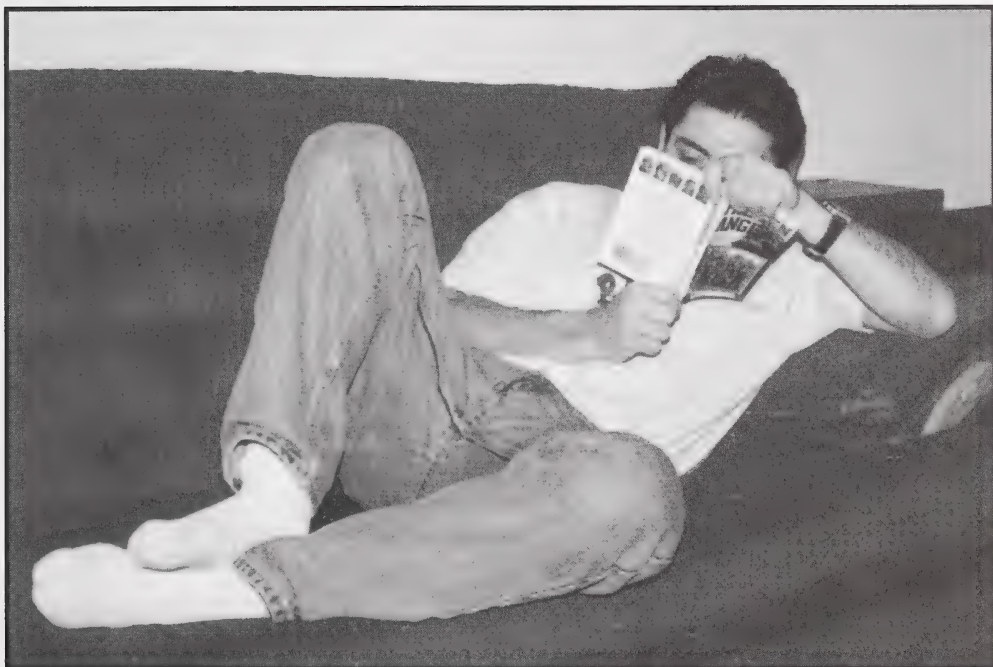
Your mark in this module will be determined by how well you complete the work in your Assignment Booklet. In this module you must complete three section assignments and one final module assignment. The mark distribution is as follows:

Section 1 Assignment	22 marks
Section 2 Assignment	25 marks
Section 3 Assignment	40 marks
Final Module Assignment	<u>13 marks</u>
TOTAL	100 marks

SECTION

1

READING THE NOVEL



Are you someone who enjoys getting away from the distractions and annoyances of day-to-day life by slipping into another world—the world of a good novel? If so, you're one of those fortunate people who have found a wonderful way to unwind and recharge their batteries while, perhaps, expanding their understanding of life and human nature. If not, it's something you should work on, for reading a gripping novel can be one of life's most rewarding pleasures.

In Section 1, you'll be reading an entire novel, making notes as you go, and responding to what you read. In your Section 1 Assignment, you'll be asked to demonstrate a basic understanding of your novel and to appraise the work from a personal point of view.

Activity 1: Getting Started



Whether your taste runs to detective stories, thrillers, romances, historical novels, science fiction, or comedy, there's always something new to try in the world of the novel. Because they're so accessible, appeal to such a variety of tastes, and have the length necessary for delving deeply into the complexities of human life, novels are by far the most popular literary genre today. People who would never dream of reading a poem, short story, or essay will spend hours immersed in the fictitious worlds created by novelists. And unlike some other genres, novels usually deal with human beings facing situations readers can at least imagine themselves having to face.

Choosing Your Novel

Up to this point in the course, you've been assigned works of literature to read. In this module, however, you'll be given a list of seven novels out of which you're to select one you'd like to read. The following list includes something for just about any taste; so take some time and choose a novel that you think you might enjoy.

English 33 Novels

To help you make a choice, there is a brief description of each novel in the Extra Help.

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Myers

Letters from Wingfield Farm by Dan Needles

Medicine River by Thomas King

The Midwich Cuckoos by John Wyndham

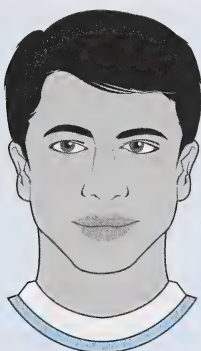
One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich by Alexander Solzhenitsyn

The Suspect by L. R. Wright



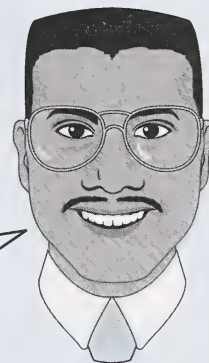
You'll be responsible for obtaining the novel you choose to read. You may decide to buy a copy from a bookstore or to borrow one from your local library; or you might consider asking your local school for a copy. Take the time you need to make a careful decision; browsing in a bookstore or library will help you make a wise selection.

NOTE: The novels on this list have all been authorized and carefully selected for English 33 by Alberta Education. Some, however, may contain material that individual students might find objectionable on religious or moral grounds. You'll be given the option of switching to a different novel at the end of Activity 2 if this becomes desirable.



I'm having trouble deciding on a novel. There's so much variety. Like, one I looked at is only one hundred and fifty pages, but others are two or three hundred pages long.

I hope you won't make your decision on that basis, Armin. Choose the novel you think you'll get the most out of. You're right in noting that there's quite a variety in the lengths and reading levels of the listed novels; that just reflects the range of interests and reading skills among English 33 students. If you're a strong reader but you pick a book just because it looks easier or shorter than others, I'll guarantee you won't get out of it what you should.



If you haven't yet obtained the novel you intend to read, now is the time to get a copy. You'll need it to complete this activity.

Strategies for Approaching Your Novel

As with anything else you read, you must first set your purpose for reading your novel. While one purpose is to be entertained by the novel, another purpose is to fully understand the novel. To fulfil the second purpose, you must read the novel carefully and stop periodically to ask questions and check your understanding. Remember, understanding the meaning of a work of literature requires the meeting of two minds—the writer's and the reader's—and the more aware readers are, the more thoughtfully they can respond to what writers have said. The following strategies are designed to help you maximize what you'll get out of your novel-reading experience.

Working with a Partner

First, it would help if you could get a reading partner—someone with whom you can compare notes and responses, discuss issues and ideas, and answer each other's questions. Reading with a partner can increase the pleasure of a reading experience as well as the understanding it gives you.

Researching the Author

Next comes the question of the author's **milieu**. Knowing something about the milieu out of which works of literature emerge can increase your understanding of those works.

Milieu: the surrounding circumstances in which something occurs, or the environment in which someone lives

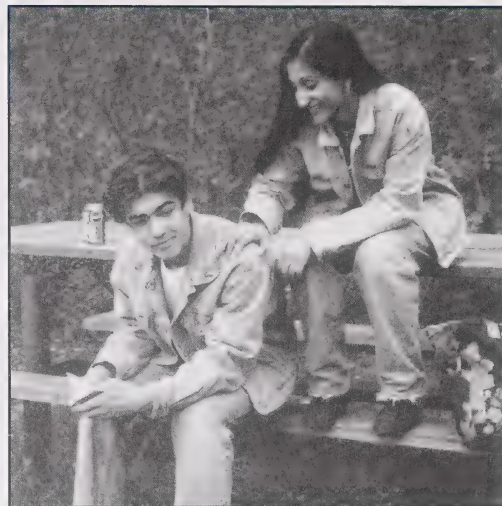


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Marc: I'm not sure I understand what milieu means.

Mr. LaBerge: Milieu includes all of the things in an author's environment that influenced how he or she wrote a particular work of fiction.

Marc: Like what?

Mr. LaBerge: Well, as you know, we're all shaped to some degree by factors in our environment. We're influenced by the events that occur around us and by the ideas and people we come in contact with.

Maria: Yeah, we learned that all of these things help form our identity and our self-concept.

- Paul:** And they help us form our beliefs, attitudes, opinions, points of view, and values. Right?
- Mr. LaBerge:** That's right. They also determine what we think about life, human nature, and the important issues of our day. All of these thoughts and ideas make up our understanding of the world. These things would naturally influence what we would write about and how we would write it.
- Suzanne:** Can you give us an example?
- Mr. LaBerge:** Okay, let's say two authors who are the same age and grew up in the same city are about to begin writing separate novels about teenagers growing up in a large city. One of the authors had a middle-class upbringing, a stable family life, was popular, graduated, and remembers his or her teenage years as being happy and carefree. The other author came from an abusive family, dropped out of school, was addicted to alcohol and drugs, and spent half of his or her teenage years living on the streets. Do you think that the stories they would write would be similar?
- Marc:** I see what you mean. The authors come from different worlds. They've experienced life very differently and would see things from different perspectives. They'd have different concerns and different ideas about what's important.
- Mr. LaBerge:** Exactly.
- Krista:** But I prefer to read a book without thinking about that sort of stuff. I mean, shouldn't the book speak for itself? If we're always looking for reflections of the writer's life and times, we don't really pay as close attention to what the book has to say.
- Mr. LaBerge:** Good point. That's why I'm leaving it up to you whether you choose to investigate the life of the writer of your novel now, or later on when you've finished reading. Whichever way you choose, you'll be required to research the author of your novel before you complete Section 2.

When you research the author of your novel, you may need the help of your librarian. A good place to start is an encyclopedia, especially for well-known writers. For information about authors not yet established enough to have been included in an encyclopedia, there are a number of sources to which you can turn. The following are four examples:

- *Dictionary of Literary Biography*
- *Contemporary Authors*
- *Twentieth-Century Authors*
- *World Authors*



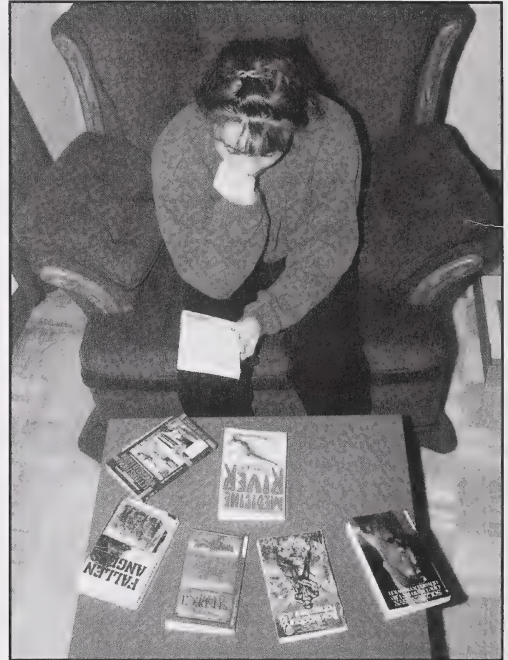
Use the Internet to find information about the author of your novel.

Previewing Your Novel

In Module 1, Section 4, the value of using a prereading strategy to learn more about a written work before actually reading it was discussed. In the Module 1, Section 4 Extra Help, you were asked to skim your English 33 textbook *In Flight*. Just as skiers should reconnoitre the terrain of a hill before skiing it, so should readers try to become familiar with a book they're about to read so that they'll know what to expect when they begin reading. Here are some of the steps you can take to preview your novel:

- If your novel has a dust jacket, read the material on the back and inside the flaps; if it's a paperback, read the back.
- Note such things as the number of pages and the size of the type used.
- Note the number and length of chapters; if the chapters have titles, skim the table of contents.
- If your novel has a foreword, read it.
- Skim a page or two at random, noting such things as level of language (formal, casual, old-fashioned, and so on), length and structuring of sentences, and complexity of ideas.

When you've finished previewing, you should have a good idea of what to expect in the novel you're about to read.



Take a few minutes now to preview your novel. As you preview, jot down the important things you learn about your novel.

JOURNAL ENTRY A

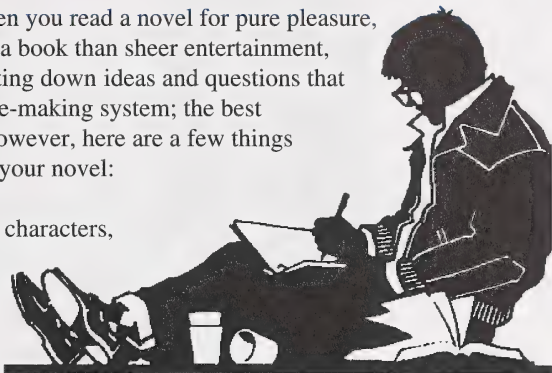
In your journal respond to the following questions.

Describe your feelings upon starting to read a novel. (Pleasant anticipation? excitement? annoyance? dread?) Explain why you feel this way. What do you expect to find in the novel you've selected?

Making Notes

You likely don't ordinarily make notes when you read a novel for pure pleasure, but when you're hoping to get more out of a book than sheer entertainment, it's a good idea to develop a system for jotting down ideas and questions that occur as you read. There's no one best note-making system; the best technique is the one that works for you. However, here are a few things you could consider while making notes on your novel:

- For more complex novels with many characters, make a list of the characters as you encounter them with a brief note on each one. For example, "Character X is Character Y's father and works in a bank."
- For some novels mapping the setting as it's described can help you visualize events and so better understand the story.
- Take the time to jot down questions or thoughts as they occur to you while reading; otherwise they're likely to be forgotten.
- Note any **allusions** the author makes that are unfamiliar and that you can't figure out from context clues.
- Note any wordings that strike you as particularly interesting, colourful, or personally meaningful. Do this for any passages that seem to be of unusual significance. Such passages are sometimes called *key quotations*.



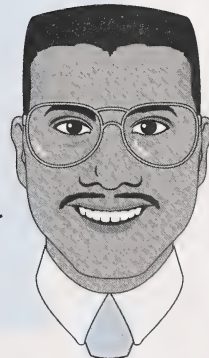
Allusion: in literature, a reference to someone or something with which the writer assumes the audience will be familiar

For more information about allusion, refer to Module 2, Section 2: Enrichment.



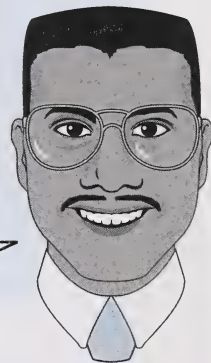
This is all very well, but if I take the time to make all those notes, I'm certainly not going to enjoy the novel very much.

Making notes may enhance your enjoyment of the novel because you're more able to keep track of the action and the characters. Notes help you see things that you might otherwise miss.





What I do is use those little yellow stickies to flag pages that are more meaningful to me or somehow seem important. Sometimes I write a word or two on a sticky to remind myself of what I wanted to remember.



Good idea. Of course, if you own the book you're reading, you can write all sorts of margin notes, and underline key quotations—all that sort of thing. Librarians don't appreciate it when you do that to library books, though.

Whatever system of note-taking you adopt, do take the time to record the sorts of things mentioned previously. It will help you answer questions later in this module while ensuring that you're reading actively and thoughtfully.

Activity 2: Reading the Opening Chapter(s)



Fictional Worlds

Stories, whether they're realistic or fantastic, serious or purely entertaining, plausible or entirely unbelievable, invite readers into a whole new world—a fictional world.

Whenever you sit down to read or listen to a story, you're asked to temporarily withdraw your conscious attention from the real world and enter into another one created by the storyteller.





Usually the world you enter when you begin a story is very much like the real one. But sometimes a story takes place in a rather different world. Perhaps it's the world of the Roman Empire, medieval Europe, or the frontier period in America. Or perhaps it's a world that's entirely the creation of the writer—the world as that person thinks it might be a thousand years from now, on a planet in a different galaxy, or an invented world not set in any particular time or space. But whether you're reading a realistic story set in the world as you know it, a historical fiction, a science fiction story, or a work of pure fantasy, you're being asked to accept someone else's fictional world for as long as the story lasts.

The Importance of Verisimilitude

Even writers of science fiction and fantasy have to make the characters, settings, and situations in their stories believable. The fictional worlds they create must be plausible. People in a story may be living thousands of years in the future and in a distant galaxy, yet they still must act like people. Writers strive to give their readers that feeling of truth in what they write—that sense that “yes, that sounds like what someone would do in that situation”—if they want their readers to accept the fictional worlds they create. This feeling of truth or plausibility is called **verisimilitude**.

***Verisimilitude:**
the quality of
seeming
realistic—of
appearing to be
true and
plausible*



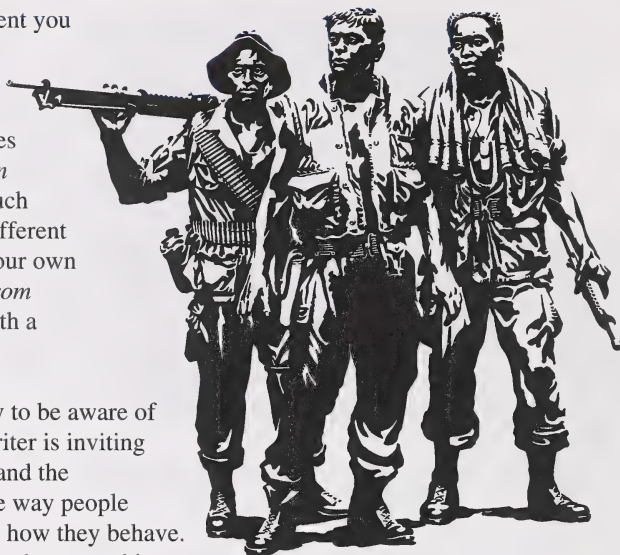
NASA

Regardless of whether the fictional worlds you encounter are highly exotic or virtually identical to the one you live in, it's important for writers to present them in such a way that readers find them believable and feel drawn into them.

Some kinds of fiction deliberately disrupt plausibility and realism. The characters may act in what seems to be inconsistent ways. Times and places may shift. The author may purposely destroy verisimilitude in order to show a world that is not neat and predictable. The effect that the author may want to achieve is to keep the reader off balance.

The novel you've selected may present you with a story set in a world that's very different from your own because of its historical era as well as its geographical location; examples would be *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and *Fallen Angels*. In such cases you'll likely encounter very different issues and concerns from those of your own life. Other novels, such as *Letters from Wingfield Farm*, will present you with a somewhat more familiar world.

As you begin reading your novel, try to be aware of the fictional world into which the writer is inviting you. Think of the era, the location, and the background circumstances. Note the way people speak, what concerns they have, and how they behave. Be alert to similarities and differences between this fictional world and the world you know. Above all, ask yourself questions like these:



- Can I make sense of this fictional world?
- Who is telling the story?
- What clues does the author give about what is really going on and where it is happening?
- How does the book try to draw me into its world?
- To what degree is the fictional world convincing?
- How similar is this fictional world to my own world? How dissimilar?
- How successful is the writer in drawing me into his or her fictional world?
- Does the author at any time deliberately disrupt plausibility and realism? For what purpose?



Now it's time to begin reading. Pick up your novel, find a quiet, comfortable spot, free from distractions if possible, and read the opening chapter(s) of your novel. Because chapter lengths vary greatly from novel to novel, you should read one or more chapters depending on the length of the ones in your book. If, for instance, you're reading L. R. Wright's *The Suspect* that was thirty-three chapters, you'd be advised to read the first seven or eight chapters. By contrast, if you're reading Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, which has only three chapters (perhaps *parts* would be a more appropriate word), you should read no more than the first one. Remember to be an alert, active reader. When you've finished reading, answer the questions that follow.

1. In a short paragraph, describe briefly what's going on at the start of your novel.
2. Briefly describe the setting. Where are the events taking place? When are they occurring? What important and/or interesting aspects of the setting did you note?

3. a. Give brief descriptions of the characters you've encountered in the opening chapter(s) of your novel.
 - b. At this stage who appears to be the protagonist? How do you know?
4. a. From what point of view is the novel told?
 - b. Why do you suppose the writer selected this particular perspective to narrate the events of your novel?
5. At this early stage are any conflicts apparent? Can you predict what conflicts will likely develop? Explain.
6. Describe the mood evoked by the opening chapter(s) of your novel. Refer to at least **two** passages or features of the text that contribute to this mood.
7. a. Describe the fictional world the writer creates in the opening chapter(s) of the novel.
 - b. What techniques does the writer employ to draw the reader in?
 - c. Do you find this fictional world convincing? Intriguing? Confusing? Why or why not?
8. To help you organize and express your thoughts and responses to the introductory chapter(s) of your novel, copy and fill in the following chart.

Early Response to the Novel	
Draw a picture of the strongest image the novel has created in your mind so far.	Questions you have about the novel up to this point.
Thoughts/feelings the beginning of the novel has generated in you.	Your expectations or predictions about what will happen in the novel.

Refer to the comments and suggestions in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 2.

At this point you should be nicely established in your novel. If at this stage you feel that you've made a poor selection or that your novel likely contains material that you'll find offensive on religious or moral grounds, now is the time to make a new selection and repeat Activities 1 and 2. In the next two activities you'll complete your reading.

Activity 3: Reading to the Middle



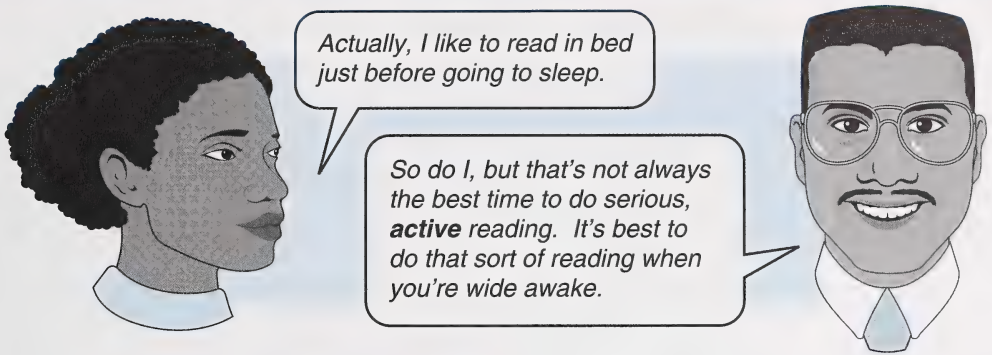
In this activity, you'll be doing a good deal of reading in your novel. If your book is one of the longer ones on the list, it may take you quite a while to get through this activity. But don't panic; just take the time you require and enjoy your novel.



Personally, I intend to read mine during commercials.



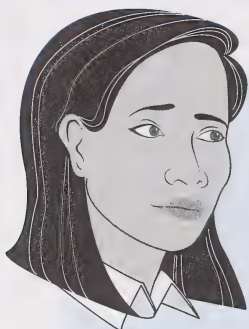
I know that was meant to be funny, Suzanne, but it addresses an important issue—how you do your reading. Here are a few hints. First, find a nice, comfortable spot—but not too comfortable; you don't want to get sleepy. Next, try to get away from as many distractions as possible—like the TV or radio and people who might want to talk to you. And last of all—and this is important—try to give yourself big blocks of time for your reading so you can really get into the book.



The main thing to do as you read is to slip into the world of your novel and get caught up in what goes on there. However, as you do that, try to remember to stay alert and to keep asking questions like the following:

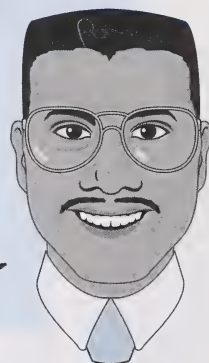
You'll learn more about the way characters are presented in Section 2: Activity 1.

- How are the characters presented? (The personality and motives of a character can be revealed by what the character says or does, by what other characters say about him or her, how characters respond to him or her, what the author tells the reader directly, and so on.)
- How convincing are the characters?
- How do the characters change?
- What topics is the writer dealing with? What does he or she seem to be saying about them?
- What does the writer's purpose in writing seem to be—other than simply entertaining readers?
- What values of the writer are revealed in the novel?
- What tone does the writer adopt toward his or her material? What mood is developed?
- How might you describe the writer's style?
- To what degree does the novel achieve verisimilitude?
- To what degree does the novel deliberately avoid verisimilitude?
- Does the novel make use of irony? Is it satirical?
- What key quotations can you note?
- What interesting and/or colourful wordings do you notice?
- What advantage does the writer gain from the point of view he or she has adopted? Can readers take the narrator's observations at face value?



You mean I'm supposed to enjoy the novel and keep all that in mind!

It's not as hard as it seems—especially if you have the habit of using those little stickies or have your own copy of the book to underline or highlight important passages. But above all else, what's most important is that you enjoy your reading; if necessary, you can always go back and reread parts for other purposes.



Now turn to where you left off in your novel and read roughly to the middle of the book. Take the time you need to maximize the pleasure and understanding you get from the novel.

JOURNAL ENTRY B

In your journal respond to the following questions.

Now that you've read halfway through your novel, describe your reaction to the book. What do you especially like about it? What do you dislike? Imagine for the moment that you were the novelist. What would you have done differently?

1. From anywhere in the first half of your novel quote **three** short passages that are meaningful to you—passages particularly important for revealing character, theme, or some other aspect of the work. For each key quotation you cite, explain what it contributes to your understanding of the novel.
2. Now list **three** other passages in which the writer of your novel wants you to infer something. Tell what you infer from each passage.
3. From what you've read up to this point, how does your novel relate to life as you know it? Are the characters and their behaviour plausible? Are they inconsistent? Has the writer achieved verisimilitude? Does the writer playfully let the world of the novel slip and slide into different times and places? Explain your response with direct references to the novel.
4. Quote **three** examples of interesting wordings you noted as you read. Explain what you find interesting about each.

5. Briefly explain the novel's central conflict as it's developed so far. How would you classify this conflict?
6. What questions do you have about what is happening at this point? Write them here for future references. If you have a reading partner, discuss them with that person before reading on. Otherwise, talk them over with your teacher or learning facilitator.

Refer to the comments and suggestions in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 3.

You've now read roughly half of your novel. In the next activity you'll be finishing the book. Happy reading!

Activity 4: Finishing Your Novel



This activity will be structured much like the preceding one because now you'll be reading the second half of your novel. Once again, be sure to take the time you need to read thoughtfully, and bear in mind the sorts of things to which you should be alert while reading (see the list in Activity 3). Keep making notes.

Turn now to where you left off in your novel and finish reading it. When you've finished, respond to the questions that follow (again, you might want to read through the questions before doing the reading).

1. In Activities 1 and 2 you were asked to predict what you'd find in your selected novel. Go back and reread your predictions. To what degree were they borne out? To what degree are you surprised?
2. How did you feel about the ending of the novel? Would you have chosen a different ending? Why?
3.
 - a. Did you encounter puzzling allusions anywhere in your novel? If so, list **two** or **three** of the most obscure ones.
 - b. Suggest what steps you might take to discover the meaning of these allusions.
 - c. Now follow your own advice and see if you can find out what these allusions refer to. If all else fails, discuss them with your reading partner, teacher, or learning facilitator.
4. Does your novel contain any irony? If so, describe it and explain what it adds to the work.
5. What questions do you have about what has happened in the last part of your novel? Discuss them with your partner, teacher, or learning facilitator.

Refer to the comments and suggestions in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 4.

JOURNAL ENTRY C

In your journal respond to the following ideas.

1. How do you feel about the way your novel ended? Would you change it if you could? If so, explain how and why.
2. Imagine that you could meet the author of your novel. What would you tell him or her about your thoughts on the book? What questions would you ask?



You learned about developing a critical response in Module 1, Section 4: Activity 4.

Congratulations! You've now finished reading your English 33 novel, you've generated a number of personal responses to it, and you've answered some questions that lay the groundwork for a critical response. In Section 2, you'll delve more deeply into your analysis of the book you've just read.

Follow-up Activities

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

Extra Help

In this section you've read an entire novel. Depending on how long your novel was, this may have been a very time-consuming project, but it's to be hoped it's one you found worthwhile.

Most English 33 students will by now have read many novels. Some of the novels will have been read for school. Others will have been chosen for leisure-time reading. Which novels have you read? How did you decide which novels to read? Did you get recommendations from friends? Did you decide by looking at the cover or reading the write-up on the back cover? Or did you read a book review that made the novel sound like the type of book you'd enjoy reading?

A book review is an essay or article that briefly discusses the most important or interesting ideas presented in a book. It also may discuss how the book came about and some information about the author that may shed some light on the author's purpose. The book review contains the reviewer's comments and opinions on the plausibility of the ideas and how effectively they're presented. In the case of a novel, the reviewer may discuss aspects like theme, plot, character, conflict, motivation, imagery, symbolism, diction, style, and so on. The reviewer will discuss only those aspects that he or she feels are exceptionally well done or if those aspects are poorly done. In doing so, the reviewer will help the reader understand the strengths and weaknesses of the book. This information will allow the reader to make an informed choice about whether or not to read the book.

Here are two sample book reviews that give you an idea of the sorts of things that reviewers say about the books they review.

Romantic Raptors

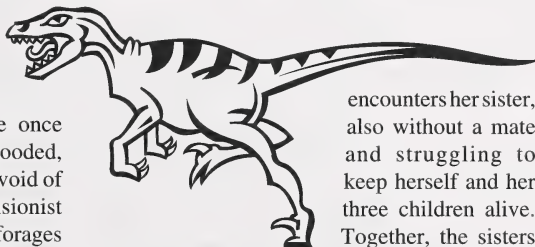
A female dinosaur falls for a younger guy

RAPTOR RED

By Robert T. Bakker
(Bantam, 246 pages, \$29.95)

He has won renown by disputing the once widespread view of dinosaurs as cold-blooded, slow-moving, dull-witted and largely devoid of social instincts. According to the revisionist picture painted by Robert T. Bakker, who forages for fossils out of Casper, Wyo., dinos were warm-blooded, intelligent, aggressive and possessed of a highly developed set of family values. Bakker's ideas have made him one of the world's leading experts on the prehistoric creatures. And they were embodied in the canny and fearsome creations that populated Steven Spielberg's 1993 movie, *Jurassic Park*. Now Bakker has written, of all things, a *novel* about dinosaurs. *Raptor Red* is a book that asks the question: can a female of the fiercely carnivorous *Utahraptor* species who has lost her mate survive in the harshly competitive world of 120 million years ago—and find happiness with a handsome young male who is several years her junior? The answer is yes, and the remarkable thing is that Bakker makes the reader care in a novel that is full of charm and fascinating detail.

Raptor Red, the book's heroine, is bereaved and at a competitive disadvantage after her mate perishes in a hunting accident. By luck, she



encounters her sister, also without a mate and struggling to keep herself and her three children alive. Together, the sisters

form an efficient hunting team, and they are soon joined by a young male who, despite the difference in their ages, is powerfully attracted to Red. The snag is that the young male and Red's sister loathe each other.

The sensible thing would be for Red and her boyfriend to go off on their own. But Red's sense of duty prevents her from abandoning her sibling. The problem is brutally resolved when the sister and two of her off-spring fall victim to rival predators; later, the third youngster takes off with another male. Alone at last, Red and her lover prepare to mate. As she looks at him, writes Bakker, she feels "a flood of emotions—aggression, joy, anger, relief." Rival experts may argue that Bakker has gone too far in endowing dinosaurs with human qualities. But his genius lies in making the reader hope that the dinosaurs were indeed creatures such as these.¹

MARK NICHOLS

¹ *Maclean's Magazine* for the book review, "Romantic Raptors," by Mark Nichols, October 2, 1995, Vol. 108, No. 40, p. 64. Reprinted by permission of *Maclean's Magazine*.

Diploma and Desire

A journalist's new novel delights and provokes

THE VOYAGE

By Robert MacNeil

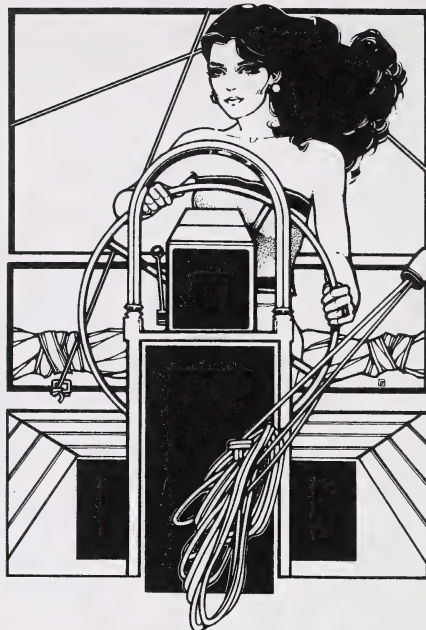
(Doubleday, 288 pages, \$32.95)

The world may see them as sensible, sober—anything but sexy. But Robert MacNeil knows the truth: Canadians are hot people living in a cold climate. In his books, at least, they just need a little encouragement to cast off the cloak of northern restraint. *Burden of Desire*, his compelling first novel, dealt with sexual morality, religion and the theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, all played out against the backdrop of the 1917 Halifax explosion. The rivetting second novel from the Montreal-born, Halifax-raised newsman and broadcaster—who retired this fall after 20 years as co-anchor of *The MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour*—revolves around an obsessive affair between a married Canadian diplomat and a free-spirited model from Guyana.

As *The Voyage* opens, David Lyon has a posting as consul general in New York City, and is on the verge of accepting Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's offer to become external affairs minister. But then news comes that model Francesca D'Anielli's yacht is missing off the coast of Sweden, and she is presumed dead. The story turns on the only clue to her disappearance, an envelope addressed to Lyon that could ruin his marriage and career.

How did Lyon get into this mess? What really happened to Francesca? Those questions give the novel its momentum. But the details that stay with the reader afterwards mark MacNeil as the real thing. There is Francesca's terrifying voyage across northern seas and her battle to

come to terms with her past. Also memorable is Lyon's droll take on Canadian diplomatic policy, the narcissism of Pierre Trudeau and the obsequiousness of Mulroney.



MacNeil wants to entertain, but he aims for depth, too. The book's secondary mission, he has stated, is "to bring Canadian preoccupations more into American awareness." *The Voyage* will resonate for readers no matter where they live.¹

JOHN DeMONT

Writing a review for your novel can be a very useful post-reading activity. Writing the review will help you sort through and process some of the ideas you encountered while reading the novel. It will also give you a chance to think about and, perhaps, resolve any unanswered questions that you may have.



Use the Internet to find reviews of some of the novels on the English 33 novel list.

¹ *Maclean's Magazine* for the book review, "Diplomacy and Desire," by John DeMont, November 27, 1995, Vol. 108, No. 48, p. 69. Reprinted by permission of *Maclean's Magazine*.



In explaining to your audience what you found were the most significant aspects of the novel, you may clarify your own thoughts and gain a richer appreciation of the novel. Your Section 3 Assignment will require you to write a book review about the novel you read. Why not start on it now?

1. Write a book review for the novel that you read. Write your review in essay format. Most book reviews are between 300 and 1000 words.
2. It's often said that the best way to understand something is to teach it. Imagine that you're teaching your novel to an English 33 class.
 - a. Design **five** questions for your students that you believe would get them really thinking about important or difficult aspects of your novel.
 - b. Now list the main ideas you'd expect to find in your students' responses to each question.

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 1: Extra Help.

If you need more information about the seven novels from which you can choose, the following brief descriptions may help you make your selection.

Fahrenheit 451 (179 pages)

Ray Bradbury

1920–

In this speculative fiction work, the state controls all thinking. The general theme is that “Books are bad. Books are burned because books are ideas.” The protagonist, Guy Montag, is a fireman whose job is to burn books. Complications arise in Montag’s professional and personal life when, out of curiosity, he steals a book from a burning library.

The ideology of state-controlled communication is closer to today’s reality, e.g., information highways, than it was at the time Bradbury wrote the novel. The author equates freedom with the expansion of ideas through reading, writing, and conversation.

Fallen Angels (309 pages)**Walter Dean Myers**

1937–

Perry, a 17-year-old black youth, has no future in Harlem, and so enlists in the army to fight in the Vietnam war. He and his friend, Pee wee, survive physically, but the horrors of war and the deaths of men, women, and children embed themselves in their psyches. Disillusioned, Perry must find meaning in life. Realistic, harsh language reflects the violence and killing that is constantly questioned throughout the plot. The novel leads to philosophical reflections on war, as young soldiers yearn for the child within.

Overcoming ethnic differences, political biases, religious beliefs, interpersonal relationships, and racial hatreds are all components of the novel.

Letters from Wingfield Farm (150 pages)**Dan Needles**

1951–

Walt Wingfield leaves his position as board chairman of a Toronto brokerage house to take over the “old Fisher place” on Rural Route 1, Persephone County. He begins to farm his newly acquired 100-acre plot as a philosopher-farmer. He believes he can establish an economically viable operation based on sound, big business principles, while using only horse-drawn equipment.

In his attempt to become one with the land, Walt encounters many of the well-established locals. Two neighbours in particular—a dour, inarticulate auctioneer and an old horse trainer—provide colourful characterization in **vignettes** about Walt’s mishaps as a farmer.

Vignette: a brief incident or scene

Pyrrhic victory: a victory won at excessive cost

Wingfield’s **Pyrrhic victories** are chronicled with wit in the form of letters to the editor of the local newspaper. By the end of the novel, Walt’s letters reflect a respect and appreciation for his new life and friends, and reveal his emerging self-awareness.

Medicine River (261 pages)**Thomas King**

1943–

Thomas King has created a tongue-in-cheek account of the inhabitants and the social structure of Medicine River. The protagonist, Will, returns to a small Blackfoot community in southern Alberta to sort out the details of his mother’s death. This return to his roots stirs many long-buried issues from his childhood and forces him to confront his true values. A progression of escapades—sometimes painful, often hilarious—brings Will to an understanding of his own identity and commitments.

Often, the personal stories are painful and touching, but there is an overriding sense of humour and optimism to the work, which leaves the reader with a sense of compassion for and understanding of the characters and an appreciation of Native culture.

The Midwich Cuckoos (220 pages)**John Wyndham**

1903–1969

In a futuristic society, the residents of a small English town are sedated by aliens for twenty-four hours. All the women of childbearing age become pregnant, and the resultant sets of twins are all telepathic. They eventually gain the power and knowledge to control the village inhabitants. Only through a violent, self-sacrificing climax are the aliens exterminated. In the process, human behaviour is re-evaluated.

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich (203 pages)**Alexander Solzhenitsyn**

1918–

Incarcerated in a Siberian camp for political prisoners, Ivan Denisovich depends upon his shrewdness and skills as a mason to survive. Solzhenitsyn introduces Ivan at 5 o'clock on a cold winter morning, and the reader follows him through a typical day. In Ivan's life, the overriding factor is self-preservation.

Based on Solzhenitsyn's own experiences, Ivan becomes a type of "Everyman" in a novel whose main theme is the overwhelming impulse and courage of the human spirit to survive. The book is not depressing in tone, in spite of the rigours and privations of a prison camp.

The Suspect (217 pages)**L. R. Wright**

1939–

George Wilcox, at the age of 80, commits the near-perfect crime. The murder happens quickly, quietly, and very unexpectedly, in a small town on the Sunshine Coast in British Columbia. This unusual turn in George's life would have gone undetected had his conscience not started to bother him. The suspense mounts as George befriends the local librarian, Cassandra Mitchell, and her new boyfriend, Karl Alberg, the local RCMP Staff Sergeant. Together, these three find themselves on a collision course of conflicting values and loyalties.

Readers should be aware of blasphemy and scenes of domestic violence, which may be distressing to some.

3. Which novel did you choose to read for this module?

For additional information that may help you choose a novel, refer to the
Appendix, Section 1: Extra Help.

Enrichment

JOURNAL ENTRY D

In your journal respond to **one** or **both** of the following ideas.

1. Pick any character in your novel other than the narrator (if your novel is told from the omniscient perspective, this leaves all the characters open as possibilities). Next, pick an interesting event from the novel in which your chosen character was involved (or at least one he or she witnessed). Now recount that incident from this character's point of view, being faithful to the way he or she would have interpreted and expressed things. Perhaps your account could be in the form of a letter or diary entry. To make this project as interesting as possible, try to select a character unsympathetic to the protagonist.
2. Choose **two** characters who are alive at the end of your novel and project ten years into the future. Assume that the two characters meet and have a conversation about what's gone on in their lives in the intervening years. Write out their conversation in the form of a dialogue.

Conclusion

In Section 1, you've read your novel, made notes, responded personally, and done some preliminary critical thinking. In Section 2, you'll dig a bit deeper into your novel and engage in somewhat more serious literary criticism.

Assignment
Booklet

ASSIGNMENT

In your Assignment Booklet complete the assignments for this section.

SECTION

2

THINKING ABOUT
YOUR NOVEL

Now that you've read your novel and done some preliminary thinking about it, you're ready to think about the novel a bit more seriously. In this section, you'll get the chance to investigate such aspects as character, motives, theme, values, conflicts, and symbolism. Your Section 2 Assignment will ask you to evaluate the success of the writer of your novel in areas like these. You'll also write a character sketch of the protagonist in your novel.

Activity 1: Characters in Literature



The characters you meet in works of fiction aren't all of the same type. Some, for example, seem to be real, complex human beings; others seem superficial.

Types of Characters

Some characters have one, or at most two, character traits. These characters lack complexity and never surprise the reader. Such characters can be summed up in one sentence. Because no one is like this in real life, you can say that such characters haven't been fully developed. You can usually assume that such characters have other facets to their personalities, but it hasn't been necessary to bring them out in the story.

Other characters are more fully developed, usually because they are more important in the story. Such characters are complex and have multifaceted personalities. They appear as real people possessing both good and bad qualities, and having both strengths and weaknesses.

Another way of categorizing fictional characters is to classify them as changing and unchanging. Some characters change little or not at all throughout a story. Others, by contrast, undergo important changes in their outlook or understanding as the story progresses. They learn something about themselves, other people, or the workings of the world because of what they've gone through in the story.

Finally, characters in literature can be divided into two types—major and minor. In virtually every story there will be at least one major character—the protagonist. Sometimes the antagonist in the story is also a major character. Other characters will be minor. Generally the major characters will be well developed and changing. Minor characters will have only one or two characteristics, and remain relatively undeveloped and unchanged by the events of the story.

A major character is normally the protagonist. Often the antagonist of a story is also one of the main characters.

A minor character is a character who plays a secondary role in a story.



Characters who are not well developed also tend to be the ones who don't change as the story progresses. Well-developed characters usually undergo a change of one kind or another.

Motivation

Motive: the reason behind an action or decision

Character presentation: the way in which an author reveals the personality of the characters

Character presentation, characterization, and revealing character are different ways of saying the same thing.

Direct presentation of character: a method of revealing characters' personalities by directly telling readers

Indirect presentation of character: a method of revealing characters' personalities through what they say, think, and do

If they want to make their characters plausible and convincing, writers must ensure that the characters are clearly and believably motivated; that is, there must be acceptable reasons for what they do. The **motives** of characters are determined by their personalities and the circumstances in which they find themselves. Given the characters' motivation, their thoughts, actions, and speeches must make sense. If a character that readers know to be cowardly is in a dangerous situation, he or she must act afraid unless there's a good reason not to.

However, in many contemporary novels (as well as some contemporary short stories and films), writers may deliberately avoid showing clear motives for the actions of their characters. The behaviours of the characters may not make sense at the first reading; the reader is meant to think about who the characters are, and try to understand them in all their complexity.

Character Presentation

Writers of fiction reveal the personalities of their characters in a variety of ways. Their methods can be divided into the following two categories.

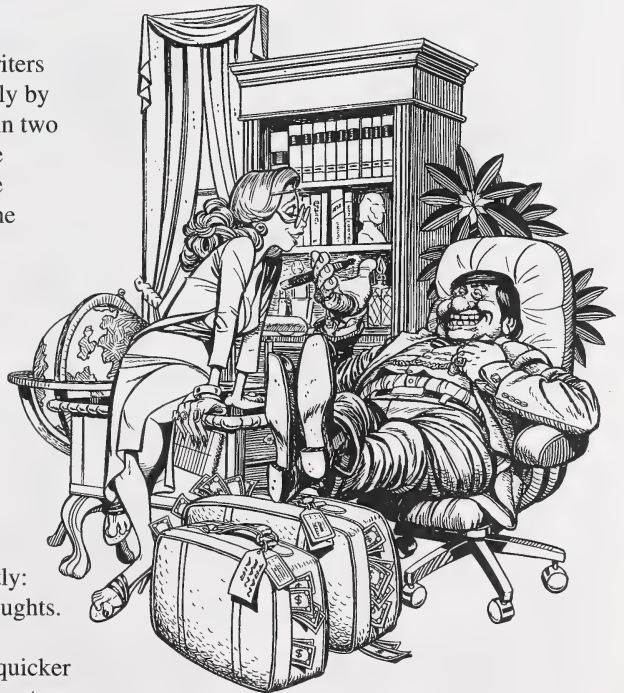
Direct Presentation

When using **direct presentation**, writers reveal characters' personalities simply by telling the reader. They can do this in two ways: either a writer can just tell the reader what a character is like, or the writer can have other characters in the story tell the reader about that character.

Indirect Presentation

When using **indirect presentation**, writers reveal characters' personalities by having the reader observe them. The reader then comes to realize what the characters are like. There are three ways of revealing characters indirectly: through their actions, words, and thoughts.

Obviously direct presentation is the quicker and simpler method of revealing character; however, it can't be used successfully alone. Indirect presentation, by contrast, is generally more credible and convincing because it's more like real life. To create successful stories, writers must show their characters speaking and acting. Readers will be convinced of a character's personality not by being told what it's like, but by seeing that character in action. Inexperienced writers usually rely heavily on direct presentation of character, while experienced writers rely largely on indirect methods.





You’ve looked at the importance of making inferences when reading fiction; this ability is especially crucial when it comes to understanding character. Even when the direct method of presentation is used, readers must be able to make inferences. When one character is talking about another, for example, that character is expressing an opinion—one that readers can’t always take at face value. Perhaps the character who’s speaking is meant to be exposed as jealous, prejudiced, or dull-witted; in which case all that he or she says must be taken with a grain of salt. The alert reader will realize this situation and make proper inferences. The unskilled reader may take it all at face value and miss the entire point.

*You learned about unreliable narrators in .
Module 4,
Section 1:
Activity 2.*

Even in a story narrated in the first person, readers must question what the narrator says about other characters. A narrator may not be trustworthy; an unreliable narrator, for example, can’t be trusted to really understand what’s going on. In such cases, readers must be able to make the inferences necessary for understanding what a character is really like. Only a direct comment made by an omniscient or limited-omniscient narrator can be taken at face value, and good writers use such comments very sparingly.

Make a chart like the one that follows and then turn back to your novel. Try to find an example of each method of character presentation and cite it in your chart.

Presentation of (insert name of character) in (insert title of novel)		
Method	Example	What Is Revealed
• what the narrator tells the reader directly about the character		
• what the character says		
• what the character thinks or feels		
• what the character does		
• what another character says or thinks about the character		
• how another character behaves or reacts in response to the character		

Refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 1 for comments and an example.

JOURNAL ENTRY A

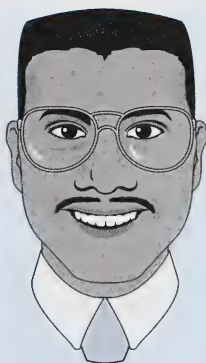
In your journal respond to the following ideas.

Think about all of the characters that you got to know in this course. Which ones did you think were the most believable? In other words, which characters came across as being real people? List the things that the authors did to make these characters seem so real.

In this activity, you've explored the various ways that characters can be presented and developed in works of fiction. In the next activity, you'll think about the characters in your novel and the conflicts that they encounter. You'll consider what motivates the characters and if the characters are portrayed in a realistic manner.

Activity 2: Characters and Conflicts in Your Novel

Characters and Motivation

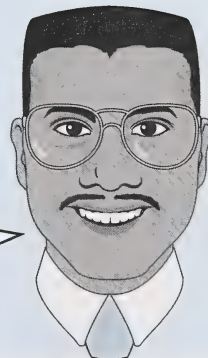


OK, now that everyone's finished reading, it's time to think a bit about the characters in your novels. John, what did you think of the protagonists in the books you read?

I'm not happy with Ivan in One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich. Perhaps it's not Ivan so much as his situation that bothers me. I sort of expected Ivan to rebel successfully, but that didn't happen.



It sounds to me as if you're still looking for that superhuman protagonist that readers encounter regularly in adventure stories. Remember, many works of fiction try to show us reality, and the reality is that human beings are flawed creatures. What you should be asking yourself is if your protagonist is a believable human being. You should also be asking if watching your protagonist function can give you any insights into human life.



JOURNAL ENTRY B

In your journal respond to the following ideas.

Describe your own thoughts and feelings about the protagonist in the novel you've read. Did you find this person likable? admirable? believable? interesting? Explain your response with references to the novel.

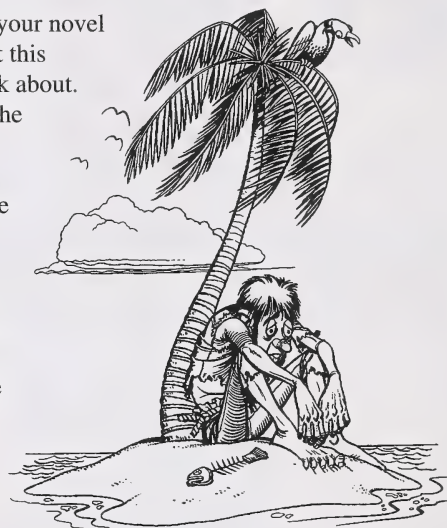
Now that you've done some thinking about the protagonist of your novel, it's time to take your analysis a bit deeper. Responding to the questions that follow should help you with your analysis.

1. a. Whether or not you found the protagonist in your novel interesting, clearly the writer of the novel felt this person was interesting enough to write a book about. Suggest why the author was so intrigued by the book's main character.

- b. Why would readers (or some readers) find the main character intriguing?

2. Think carefully about the behaviour of the protagonist (or another main character you found interesting). To what degree is this character plausible? In responding, consider questions like these:

- What forces and ideas motivate the character?
- Are these *motives* sufficient to explain all of the character's actions?
- Is the character consistent throughout the novel? If there are major changes in his or her attitudes or behaviour, are they plausibly motivated?
- Given that a novel is long enough to develop well-rounded, multi-faceted characters, does your novel develop the character sufficiently to make him or her seem lifelike?



For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.

As you know, writers can use direct and indirect methods of revealing character. Good writers tend to rely principally on indirect methods of presentation; it's far more telling to watch characters in action than it is to be told what they're like. When good writers do choose to comment on the personalities of their characters, they often do so through the eyes of other characters. These characters will generally see things from their own limited perspectives, leaving it up to readers to figure out just how much they should take at face value.

3. Keeping these facts in mind, how successful do you think the writer of your novel was in revealing the personalities of the principal character(s)? What could have been done differently to improve character development in the book?

In thinking about a character from a work of literature, it can sometimes help to make comparisons (and contrasts) with a character from another work.

4. Think of a character from any work of literature you’ve already read in this course with whom an interesting comparison could be made with the protagonist of your novel. Then copy and complete the chart that follows.

	Similarities	Differences
Protagonist of Novel		
Character from Another Work of Fiction		

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.

JOURNAL ENTRY C

In your journal respond to the following idea.



Select from your novel a minor character that the author left relatively undeveloped. Now imagine you’re the author and your publisher has asked that you develop this person into a more fully developed character. In two or three paragraphs develop this character more fully, suggesting such things as background, personality traits, motivations, values, goals, relationships, and conflicts.

Conflicts

In many kinds of twentieth century novels, the conflicts are not clearly defined. There may be multiple conflicts, and the conflicts may shift throughout the novel. The novel may even lack a real conflict in the traditional sense, and, in its place, there may just be an unfolding of events or character.

As you probably recall from past language arts courses, the three principal classifications of conflict are as follows:

- person versus person (The protagonist is pitted against one or more human antagonists.)
- person versus environment (The protagonist is pitted against a nonhuman force or set of circumstances such as nature or society at large.)
- person versus himself or herself (The protagonist must fight an inward battle with some aspect of his or her own personality.)

Conflicts can also be of different types—physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or emotional.

In “Amanda and the Wounded Birds,” for example, the person-versus-person conflict between Amanda and her mother is clearly not physical. Rather, it’s an emotional/mental conflict—Amanda’s goal is to get more of her mother’s attention. The person-versus-person conflict in “Past Imperfect,” however, is physical. Roger tries to get rid of Corliss in order to benefit from Corliss’ invention.



5. Identify the conflict in each of the following short stories.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| a. “Nei Um Lung, Ma?” | c. “The Landlady” |
| b. “My Father Rescued a Cat” | |

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.

Some short stories contain only one conflict. While other conflicts may be hinted at, they’re generally left undeveloped, and are of little importance to the story as a whole. A novel, however, is a very different genre. While there’s bound to be one principal conflict, there are frequently a number of reasonably well-developed secondary ones that add richness to the work and make for a closer approximation to the complexities of real life.



I know what you mean. In my novel there are several characters and they all have their own problems and conflicts. Some work them out and others don't. It gets a bit complicated, but it is a lot like real life and it keeps things interesting.

6. a. Take a few minutes and do some brainstorming. Try to come up with a list of as many different conflicts as you can that are experienced by the different characters in your novel.
- b. Now classify each of the conflicts as internal (person versus self) or external (person versus person or environment). Would you classify any of the internal conflicts as dilemmas? Why or why not?
- c. Having thought about the various conflicts in your novel, which seem to you to be the most important ones—the internal or external conflicts? Explain your ideas with references to the book itself.

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.

JOURNAL ENTRY D

In your journal respond to **one** or **both** of the following ideas.

1. Did any of the conflicts in your novel remind you of a situation you've experienced in your own life? If so, describe the situation and explain how you resolved it. Were you satisfied with the result?
2. Describe another novel or movie that presented a conflict similar to one in your novel. In that work how was the conflict resolved? Which of the works do you prefer—this novel or the other work? Why?

In this activity, you've spent time looking closely at the characters in your novel and at what makes them tick. You've compared a character from your novel with at least one other character from another work of literature. Which characters did you find were the most interesting? Why? In the next activity, you'll explore some of the ideas that your novel conveys.

Activity 3: Themes and Values

What Does the Book Have to Say?

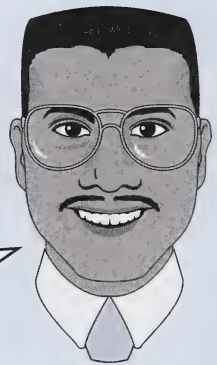


Earlier in the course, you spent some time looking at the themes or insights into life that stories have to offer their readers. You may have found that expressing the theme of a short story, for example, can be a difficult business. There can often be a variety of interpretations of theme. As well, the insights into life often seem to go deeper the more you think about them. In the case of novels, as you might expect, the situation can get a good deal more complex.



But I don't think that's true of my novel. It's got such an obvious message it's practically preaching at the reader. Even the title refers to the book's antiwar theme—Fallen Angels.

*Good point. Just because a book is long, it doesn't mean that its theme is profound. A short story like *Flowers for Weddings and Funerals*, for example, may have a more complex theme than a novel of several hundred pages. But a well-written novel can reveal so much more about human life that even if the theme seems obvious at first glance, you'll probably discover that it has a lot more to say if you dig a bit deeper. Just the way a novel reveals people interacting, for instance, can tell an active reader a tremendous amount about the writer's ideas about human relationships. I think that's true of your novel, Marc, even if its principal message is a bit moralistic.*



Because novels give writers the ability to develop and convey their ideas on a wide variety of topics, it's not always easy to simply say, "The theme of this novel is. . . ." In one novel, an author can express views on many aspects of life such as—love, death, aging, war, hope, family relationships, and on and on. Almost always there will be one overriding insight into some aspect of life, but there are bound to be many more observations—both deliberate and unintentional—for an alert reader to note.

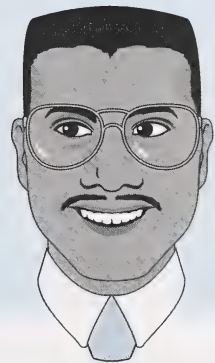
1. What subjects relating to human life does your novel explore? Use brainstorming or clustering to come up with a list of ideas.
2. Now try in one or two sentences to express the author's ideas on each of the subjects you listed in question 1.
3. Having thought about the various things that your novel has to say about life, try to express the book's central, unifying, insight into life—that is, its theme. The novel's title may or may not be useful in helping you determine the novel's theme.

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.



I don't have any problem figuring out what my novel has to say, but I do have a problem accepting it. I mean, it's a well-written book, I guess, but it isn't really fair in the way it makes the world look. It sort of distorts reality, if you know what I mean.

Good point, Suzanne, and that's what comes next—your own evaluation of your novel's theme.



4. In one or more paragraphs, express your views about the theme of your novel. Is it truthful? Does your book give an honest portrayal of life, or does it exaggerate a bit in order to make a point? Try to be specific in your response; if you think your novel's theme isn't entirely faithful to the way things really are, show where and how it goes wrong.

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.

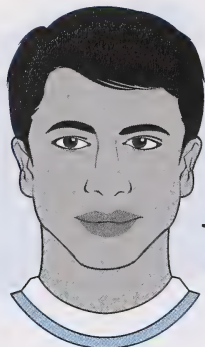
The Writer's Values

Closely related to the novel's themes are the values reflected in those themes. Within any novel, different characters clearly hold different values, and these values are revealed in what the characters say and how they behave.

5. Select a key moment in your novel where the protagonist had to make a major decision or take action. Explain briefly what it was your protagonist did or decided and what factors led up to this response. Then, in one or more paragraphs, explain what that response reveals about the protagonist's outlook on life.

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.

Of course, in some cases a character's values will reflect those of the writer of the novel, but this is by no means something a reader can take for granted. The reader has to assess the values of the various characters. The reader also has to determine the values of the writer that underlie the novel itself.



*I know what you mean about characters' values not necessarily reflecting those of the writer. I read *Medicine River*, and at first I thought the values of the protagonist—the photographer—were exactly the same as the writer's. But the more I read, the more I realized that it wasn't that simple. I mean, the author doesn't entirely disagree, but he makes it clear that things aren't as black and white as the characters think.*

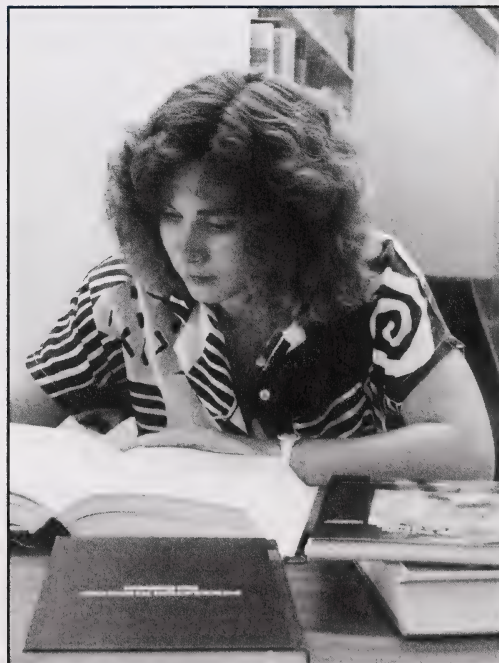
6. Select **two** major characters from your novel and list **two or three** important values suggested by their behaviours or choices.
7. Do either of the characters selected in question 6 undergo a change in values during the course of the novel? If so, explain how and why?
8. What does the novel suggest about the writer's own values? How do the protagonist's values reflect those of the writer?
9. Do you share any of the values reflected in the novel? Explain your response.

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.

In Section 1: Activity 1, you were given the option of doing some research into the life of the author of your novel either before or after reading the book. If you opted to dig into the background of your novelist before reading, your understanding of the novel was probably somewhat affected by what you learned.

If you haven't yet explored your writer's life, it's time to do so now. Using the resources suggested in Activity 1 of Section 1 and/or any other resources you can find (remember to ask for help from the librarian if necessary), research the life of the author of your novel.

10. Explain what you've learned about how the writer's life and times (that is, the writer's milieu) likely affected his or her values and way of seeing the world. Describe how the writer's milieu is reflected in the novel you read.



For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.

JOURNAL ENTRY E

In your journal respond to the following ideas.

You were given the choice of when to research the life of your novelist. How do you think the timing of your research affected your response to and understanding of the book? Do you wish you'd done things differently? Explain your ideas.

Now you have a better understanding of the ideas that the writer of your novel wants to convey to readers. You thought about the theme(s) in your novel and evaluated the values that are expressed. You became aware that the values you inferred from the characters' words, thoughts, or actions are not necessarily the values the author holds. In the following activity, you'll examine literary symbols used in your novel and how they're used to convey the writer's message.

Activity 4: Understanding Symbolism



Symbol:
something that
stands for
something else;
an object,
person, or event
that has a
meaning greater
than its literal
meaning

Symbolism: the
use of symbols in
literature; the
use of signs and
symbols to
represent
abstract ideas
such as
opportunity, life,
death, freedom,
happiness, love,
hope, and so on



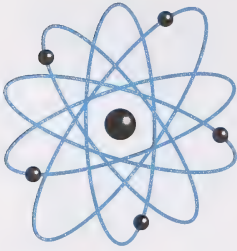
How skilled are you at recognizing literary **symbols**? Many readers feel rather insecure in this area; they may tend to either miss important symbols entirely or, conversely, to see **symbolism** everywhere, in places writers never intended. Being able to identify and respond to literary symbols requires a good deal of skill on the part of a reader. If symbolism is something that makes you feel uncomfortable; this activity should help you.

Put most simply, a symbol is something that stands for something else. For example, the cross is a symbol of the Christian religion. The maple leaf and the beaver are symbols of Canada. A handshake is a symbol of friendliness; a fist, one of anger.

You encounter symbols every day. Many are visual: a heart, a skull-and-crossbones, the swastika, the Star of David. Other symbols are auditory—for example, the theme song to a television show. If you're a hockey fan, it's unlikely that you could ever hear the theme music to *Hockey Night in Canada* without thinking of hockey. For you, the music represents, or symbolizes, hockey.

1. Brainstorm a list of symbols in your school, work place, church, club, or home.
2. List and describe two symbols in movies you've seen.

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 4.



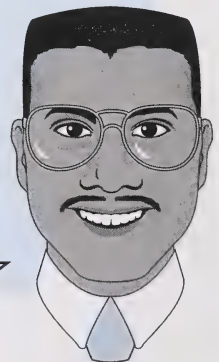
A literary symbol is something occurring in a work of fiction that has a literal meaning in the story as well as a symbolic meaning. Whether it's a character, an object, an event, a place, a situation, or anything else, it's a literary symbol if it has a meaning larger than itself.

The sun, for example, might represent hope or happiness in a particular novel. A tree could symbolize strength or endurance. A child might be a symbol for innocence. Always remember, though, that you can't predetermine the value of a literary symbol. That child could just as easily be used as a symbol for selfishness or deceitfulness; it's only by reading the story that you can establish the literary symbols.



But why do writers sneak these symbols into their stories? Is it just to make students tear their hair out trying to figure them out?

Probably it seems that way sometimes, Paul; but the fact is that literary symbols, if used properly, can add tremendous richness to a work of literature.



Writers use symbols because they add depth of meaning to their stories. However, most stories can be enjoyed and understood even if the readers don't pick up on the symbolic meanings. A few stories, however, rely so completely on their symbolic meanings that a failure to understand the symbols will mean a failure to understand the stories entirely.

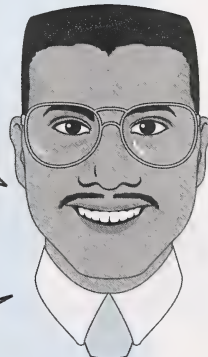
Here are four important points to remember as you look for symbols in stories:

- Literary symbols get their meanings within the stories in which they occur. In other words, if you encounter an owl in a story, don't assume that, since in Canadian society owls often symbolize wisdom, that's what it represents in the story. The owl, if it has any symbolic value, will get it from the work itself, and a careful reading should tell you what it symbolizes.
- If something in a story has symbolic value, there will likely be repeated references made to it in the story. If it's mentioned just once, chances are it doesn't have symbolic meaning.
- Don't start seeing symbols everywhere you look. If you're going to err on one side or the other, it's generally better to miss symbolic meanings than to read them in where they don't exist.
- Symbols can represent complex clusters of ideas, so they can be hard to label precisely. This doesn't mean, though, that they represent anything a reader says they do; their possible meanings depend on the context in which they occur.



But how can you tell when something in a story has a symbolic meaning?

Believe it or not, you get better at it with practice. Remember that anything with a symbolic meaning will likely have repeated references made to it in the work, so just ignore anything else when looking for symbols. Then take those things that you suspect may have more than a literal meaning and think about them in relation to the story's theme and the protagonist's conflicts.



If you do this, I think you'll start picking out symbols. Just don't go overboard once you get the hang of it, though, and read in symbolic meanings everywhere!

Maria: I read the novel *Fahrenheit 451*. It's about firemen who aren't firefighters, but rather people who set fires to destroy books. There's a lot of symbolism in this novel—like the salamander and phoenix crests worn by the firemen.

John: What's the symbolic significance of the crests?

Maria: Salamanders, according to myth, are supposed to endure fire. That's why the firemen in the novel use the symbol of the salamander. On the other hand, the salamander also stands for the ideas contained in the books that are burned; like the salamander, ideas can't be destroyed by fire. The phoenix, a mythical bird that burned and emerged from the ashes with renewed life, is a symbol of strength and purity. In the novel, the firemen believe they are purifying the world by burning books; but like the phoenix, the ideas in the books will never die.



John: It sounds like you read a very interesting novel, but I'm not sure I understand the title *Fahrenheit 451*.

Maria: I couldn't figure out what the title referred to until I did a bit of research. In the novel, the number 451 is the symbol for firemen. Paper, out of which books are made, ignites at 451 degrees Fahrenheit. I guess that makes the title symbolic, too. What novel did you read, John?

John: I read *The Midwich Cuckoos*, and I think the entire situation in the book is symbolic of some of our society's problems. The central symbol seems to me to be the affected children.

3. Did you pick out any symbolism in your novel? If you did, explain the symbols and tell to what degree you found them effective in helping the writer achieve his or her purposes. (Note: If you're having trouble, a good place to look first is your novel's title.)

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 4.

Follow-up Activities



If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

Extra Help

Do one or more of the following activities.

Activity 3 of this section looked at themes and values in the novel you read. Because of their length, novels can do far more than simply illustrate one insight into life. They may, in fact, say a great many things about various aspects of life and human nature.

1. Following is a list of nine thematic topics about which many works of literature have something to say:

- alienation
- reality and illusion
- hope
- pursuit of dreams
- family
- generation gap
- aging/death
- response to conflict
- success

Choose **two** topics from this list that can be related to your novel; for each topic do the following:

- express what the novel has to say about it in a statement of theme
- explain in one or more paragraphs how the novel reveals that theme

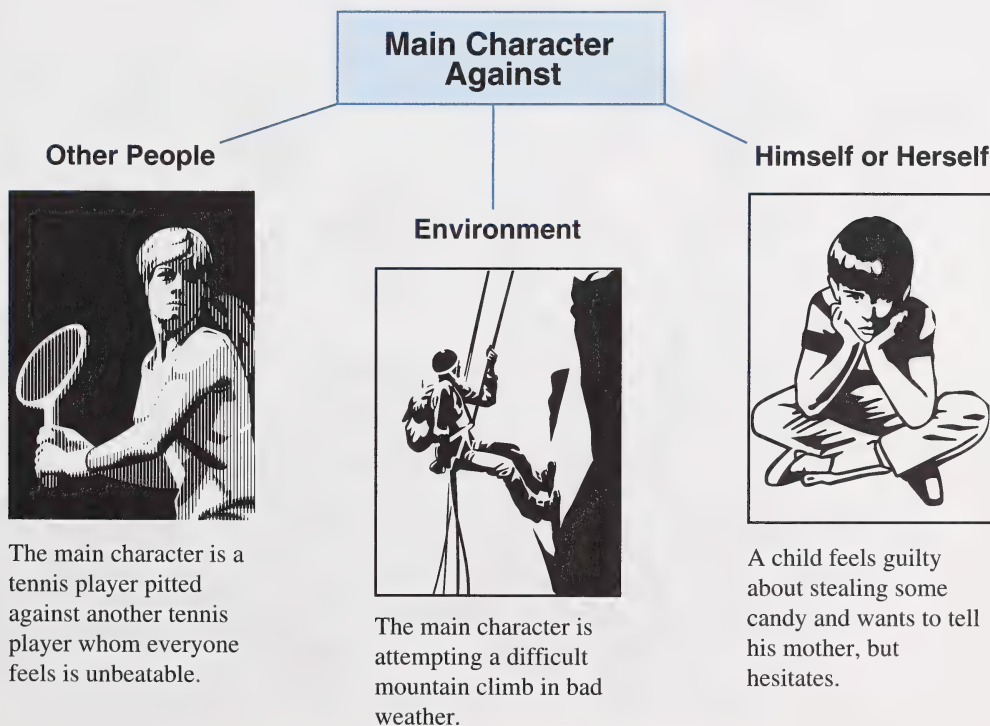
For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 2: Extra Help.

Conflict

In many kinds of twentieth century novels, the conflicts are not clearly defined. There may be multiple conflicts, and the conflicts may shift throughout the novel. The novel may even lack a real conflict in the traditional sense, and, in its place, there may just be an unfolding of events or character.

A successful story must have interesting characters—real-life individuals who want something and are striving to get it. But in order to maintain the audience's interest through to the end of the story, there must be a problem, or *conflict*. Conflict is the struggle between the main character and an opposing force. Without conflict, the main character would get whatever he or she wanted, right away, without any effort. Of course, the story might end up being much shorter, but would you really want to read something so predictable?

Conflict occurs when an obstacle prevents a character from achieving his or her goal. The following diagram summarizes the three main types of conflict in works of fiction.



2. In your notebook, identify the type of conflict in each of the following works of fiction. For each one explain the nature of the conflict.

The following is an example.

“Paradise Cafe”—The conflict is person versus person. Lulie’s conflict was with Graham. She struggled in vain to understand him and continue their relationship.

- “Run”
- “Marriage Is a Private Affair”
- “Flowers for Weddings and Funerals”

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Extra Help.

Symbolism

A device that authors use in writing is symbolism. A symbol is an object, person, or event that has a meaning greater than its literal meaning. For example, in some cultures the lion represents courage. The olive branch and the dove are thought of as symbols of peace. Do you know any other symbols of peace?

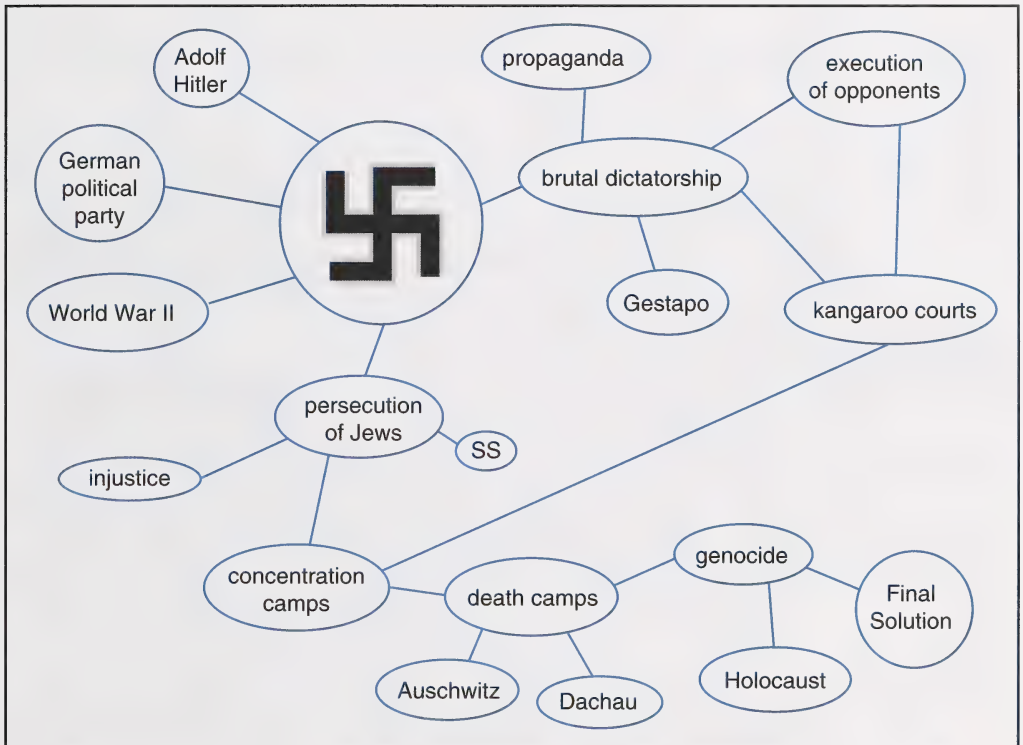


Even the letters of the alphabet are symbols that form words. There are symbols that represent the zodiac, mathematical operations, and even countries and provinces. You no doubt know that the beaver and maple leaf symbolize Canada.



Symbols generally have more than one layer of meaning. At one level, for instance, the cross simply represents one religion among many. To a devout Christian, however, it has a much deeper significance, representing a depth of feeling, commitment, and faith. A Nazi swastika at one level simply represents a political party in power in Germany from 1933 to 1945. To a German Jew at that time, however, it would have meant persecution and danger; it would no doubt have aroused feelings of terror, hatred, and anger.

Study the following cluster of ideas associated with the swastika that was done by a Grade 12 social studies student.



It is this complex of emotions and ideas that distinguishes a symbol from a mere sign. A sign, such as a stop sign or a figure on the label of a piece of clothing indicating that it should be dry-cleaned, brings to mind only a single meaning.



So, what's the difference between a symbol and a sign?

Literary Symbols

Literary symbol: any character, object, situation, action, or event that has a second meaning in addition to its literal meaning in a work of literature.

Literary symbols are used to help the reader gain a better understanding of the message that the writer wishes to convey.

A **literary symbol** is a concrete image—an object, a person, a situation, an action—that occurs in a piece of writing and that is meant to bring to mind a cluster of ideas and/or emotions in the reader. It will have a literal meaning within the story, but it suggests other meanings as well.

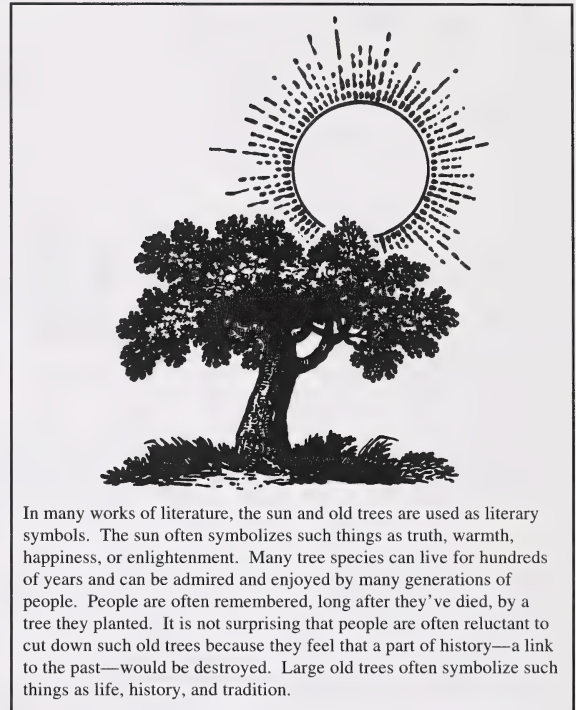
Hunting for Symbols

The ability to recognize and interpret literary symbols is important to a perceptive reader. However, students becoming aware of literary symbolism often go wild in their hunt, seeing symbols everywhere—in places writers never intended that they be. Remember, most details in a story are purely literal; don't try to turn everything into a symbol. It's probably better to miss an intended symbol, than to pervert a story's meaning by seeing symbols where there simply aren't any.

Here are three hints that should help you in recognizing literary symbols:

- Literary symbols are almost always repeated and emphasized through a story. If a detail is referred to in passing or is not stressed, probably it is not meant to symbolize anything.
- Since a symbol represents a cluster of ideas, it may be hard to label precisely. This does not mean, though, that it represents anything a reader says it does; its possible meanings depend on the context in which it occurs.
- A literary symbol's meaning occurs in the story, not outside it. For example, in one story rain may symbolize hope and life, in another death and destruction, and in another, nothing at all. Don't bring any preconceived ideas about the symbolic meanings of things into a story you read (for instance, that an owl symbolizes wisdom); let the story tell you what something symbolizes in that piece of literature.

In some works of literature, symbolism is extremely important; when readers fail to recognize the symbolism in the literature, they may find that they are unable to fully understand the meaning of the work. In other works of literature, symbols add depth and new dimensions to the story, but they are not vital to the reader's understanding of the work. Other literary works contain no symbols at all; everything is meant to be taken at face value.



3. The cottonwood tree in “Paradise Cafe” is mentioned twice—once at the beginning of the story and then again at the end. The tree is described differently in each instance.
 - a. How does Lulie describe the cottonwood tree the first time?
 - b. How does the tree look the second time it is described?
 - c. What does the description of the tree tell you about what Lulie feels at the time?
 - d. What does the cottonwood tree symbolize? What insight is communicated by this symbol?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Extra Help.

Enrichment

Artistic unity: in writing, the quality of every element in a story being essential to the writer's purpose

Often readers of a work of literature such as a novel will want to discuss its **artistic unity**.

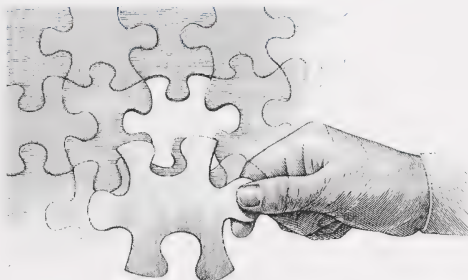
Artistic unity refers to how well all of the different elements of the story—things like plot, setting, characters, diction, rhythm, level of language, subject matter, tone, and mood—work together to fulfil the purpose that the writer had in mind.

The first thing to do when you start thinking about a story's unity is to consider the writer's purposes. One of these will invariably be to entertain readers; if they aren't entertained, they won't read the story at all. Another purpose will be to convey the writer's thoughts about some aspect or aspects of life and human nature. At this point, then, you should start asking what the writer is trying to say—in other words, what the story's theme or themes are.

Once you've determined what ideas the writer hopes to leave with his or her audience, you can start looking at various aspects of the story to see to what degree they contribute to conveying these ideas. How does the narrative point of view help develop the story's theme(s)? How do the elements of character, plot (and its conflicts), and setting work toward communicating the writer's ideas? How does the writer's style—diction, level of language, figures of speech, and so on—contribute? Does the writer use devices like symbolism and irony? Do such devices contribute to his or her purposes, or do they tend to muddy things? Are the writer's tone and the mood created in the story consistent with the story's theme?

Think of your novel and answer each of the following questions. This is a rather mechanical approach to the issue of artistic unity; but if you're having trouble, it may help you sort out your thoughts.

1. What important ideas or insight(s) into life does the writer of your novel hope to leave with readers?
2. Explain how the narrative point of view contributes to (or detracts from) the communication of these insights.



When a work of fiction achieves artistic unity, everything fits together.

3. How does the central conflict of the novel help develop the writer's ideas?
4. To what degree do the novel's principal characters contribute to the development of the writer's insights?

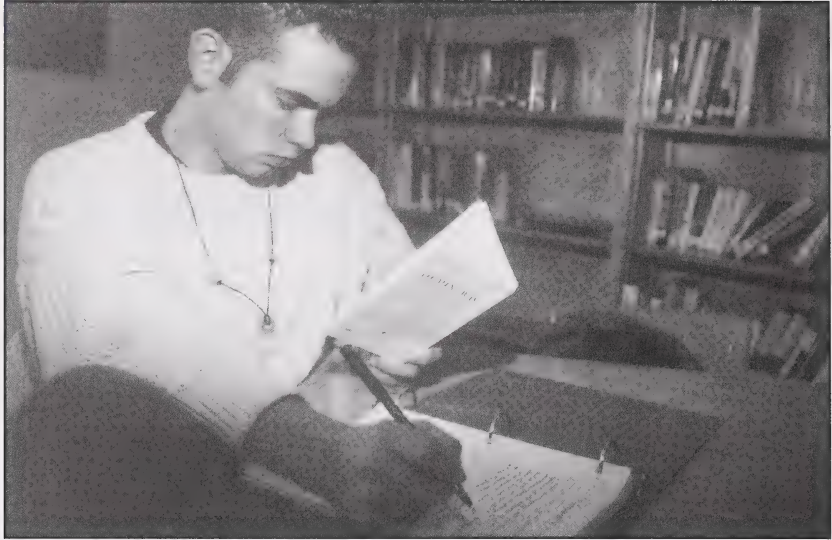
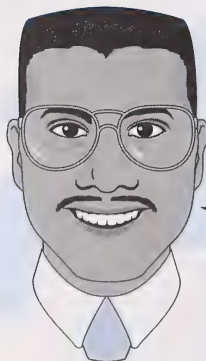


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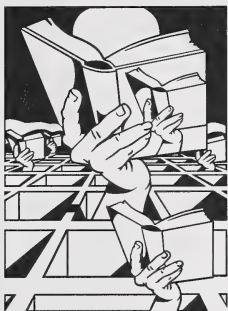
5. How does the novel's setting help develop the ideas presented in the novel?
6. Describe the writer's style. Is it consistent with his or her purpose (the development and conveyance of the novel's insights into life)? Explain why or why not.
7. Describe the novel's chief mood and the writer's tone. To what degree do they contribute to his or her purposes?
8. Is symbolism used? Does it contribute to the development of the novel's ideas? Explain.

To assess and expand on your responses, refer to the guiding questions in the Appendix, Section 2: Enrichment.



While many fiction writers strive to create works that have artistic unity, others deliberately choose to create works of fiction that don't conform to the notion of "unity." Instead, these authors organize their writing in other ways. Can you think of stories or movies that work well even though they don't have artistic unity?

Now that you've sorted out to what degree various aspects of the novel work together to achieve the writer's purposes, you're well positioned to discuss the artistic unity of your novel in a more integrated format—perhaps an essay or a response to an essay-type exam question. When it comes to presenting your ideas in that sort of format, always remember to defend your assertions with specific references to the literature you're discussing.



One of the chief goals of this module is to increase your understanding of the novel as a genre. Another goal is to increase your ability to read lengthy interpretive works actively and critically. An equally important objective is to help increase the enjoyment you take from reading good novels and, perhaps, to expand your awareness of the extraordinary range of novels out there just waiting to be read. If you don't read novels frequently, or if you're stuck in a rut with your reading—always selecting science fiction or romances or murder mysteries, for example—why not make it one of your own goals to expand your reading horizons?

If you enjoyed reading your English 33 novel, you might consider reading more works by the same author. The fiction section of your local library should be arranged alphabetically by author, so it shouldn't be difficult to locate more books. Another idea would be to return to the list of novels given you in Section 1: Activity 1 and choose another. These works were all carefully selected for English 33 students; and though that's no guarantee that you'll like them all, it does mean that they'll have more to offer you than simple entertainment.

Of course, you might just want to talk to people and get their recommendations on novels they've enjoyed. Or perhaps you already have several novels in mind that you've been wanting to read for some time but just haven't got around to it. And while current best-seller lists can tell you only what people are buying, not what's worth reading, they may prove useful at times in helping you discover recent novels that are enjoying better-than-average success.

Whatever approach you choose, it might be helpful to make up a list of novels you'd like to read. Keep the list open-ended, and add titles as they occur to you while deleting those you read or find to be not to your taste. If you make this a habit, you should manage to provide yourself with many hours of pleasure and personal development.

Conclusion

In Section 1, you read your chosen novel and responded to it personally and critically. In Section 2, you've looked at your novel somewhat more closely from the points of view of character, motives, theme, values, conflicts, and symbolism. At this point you should be thoroughly familiar with the work and prepared to engage in responses of a more complex nature—something you'll be doing in Section 3.

ASSIGNMENT

In your Assignment Booklet complete the assignments for this section.

SECTION

3

THE NOVEL—A
FINAL LOOK

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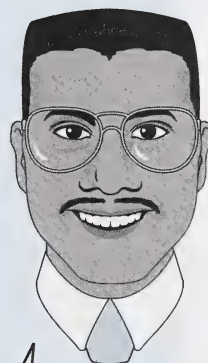
At this point you've read your novel and done some serious thinking about it. You'll begin this final section by reconsidering the novel's opening chapter(s) from the vantage point you've gained from your work in the first two sections of this module.

The section will end with a critical essay in which you'll be comparing the novel you've read to other literature you've encountered in English 33. You'll also get a chance to demonstrate your understanding and appreciation of the novel you read by writing a book review about it.

Activity 1: Reconsidering the Opening Chapter(s)

When I was doing the work on symbolism in Section 2, I ended up rereading some parts of my novel. It's really amazing what you can get out of a book when you go back and read it again. I mean, there were all these hints and references that don't really mean much to you until you know what comes later; but when you do know how things develop, they jump right out at you.

That's a very true observation, Suzanne. A well-written work of literature really deserves to be read several times. With each reading it will say things to you that you missed the first time through.



Oh-oh! You aren't going to ask us to reread the whole novel, are you?



Only if you really want to, Paul, though I do recommend it for some time in the future. Right now, all I want you to do is reread your novel's opening to see how much more meaningful it is the second time around.



Go back to your novel and reread the chapter or chapters you read in Section 1: Activity 1. As you read, be alert to ways in which these pages strike you differently from how they did on your initial reading. Pay particular attention to how such things as characters, setting, conflicts, and themes are introduced.

1. Did you note any significant details on your second reading that meant little to you the first time through? If so, identify them and explain their significance.
2. Now that you know what comes later, what foreshadowing do you see in these early chapters?

3. a. Are any important symbols introduced near the beginning of the novel? If so, identify them.
- b. Were you aware of the importance of these symbols after your first reading of the novel's opening?

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.

JOURNAL ENTRY A

In your journal respond to **one** or **both** of the following ideas.

1. Review your responses to the questions in Section 1: Activity 2. Compare your feelings about your novel's opening chapter(s) now to your original reaction. How do they differ? What new insights did you gain from reading the opening chapters a second time?
2. Compare the predictions you made when first beginning the novel with the way things turned out. How accurate were they? After rereading the book's opening, do you feel that your original presumptions were justified, or were you missing things that you really should have picked up on? Explain your response.

It's unlikely that at this point you'll have the time or the desire to reread your novel. But if you enjoyed the book, why not pick it up again at some time in the future and read the whole thing again? You may be very surprised at how much more you get out of it the second time around.

Activity 2: Comparing and Evaluating



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Comparing Stories

As you develop your ability to analyse and understand works of fiction, you should be able more and more to compare aspects of different stories.

A good way to start working on this skill is to do it rather mechanically at first—in chart fashion. This process involves establishing the categories you intend to use for a comparison of two or more stories and setting them out in a chart. Then all that's needed is to fill in the spaces. Seeing things laid out in chart form will help you get on to the next stage—writing up your findings in essay form. Here's a chart with a number of possible comparison categories listed.

	Story 1 (<i>insert title</i>)	Story 2 (<i>insert title</i>)
Narrative Point of View		
Character Presentation (methods used to reveal character)		
Character Plausibility and Development		
Tone		
Symbolism		
Values		
Mood		

Krista: How do you use a chart like this to compare one work of fiction with another?

Mr. LaBerge: You begin by writing the titles of the stories that you're comparing at the top of the chart. Then you jot down in point form the information for each story. For example, let's say we wanted to compare the stories "The Landlady" and "Amanda and the Wounded Birds." The first category for comparison is narrative point of view. What is the narrative point of view in "The Landlady"?

Krista: After looking the story over again, I'd say the narrative point of view is limited omniscient. The narrator describes what Billy is thinking, but not what the landlady is thinking.

Mr. LaBerge: Good. So you would write that information into the chart under "The Landlady." What's the narrative point of view in "Amanda and the Wounded Birds"?

Armin: The story's told from Amanda's perspective, so that would make it the first person point of view.

Mr. LaBerge: Excellent. You'd write that information into the chart as well. The next category is character presentation. What are we looking for here?

Maria: I guess we want to show how the author reveals the characters in each of the two stories. We could mention that the author uses direct presentation to tell the reader about how Billy and the landlady look and act. The author of "Amanda and the Wounded Birds" uses mostly indirect presentation to show readers what the characters are like.



Mr. LaBerge: Great. Now we have some information written down about the narrative point of view and character presentation in both stories.

Suzanne: Fine, but what do we do with all of the information we gather?

Mr. LaBerge: Well at this point you can draw some conclusions about such things as how well the audience gets to know the characters in both stories.

John: Oh, like you get to know Billy quite well, but you really never know what makes the landlady tick.

Krista: And you get to know Amanda well because she's telling the story and lets you know how she feels about things.

Mr. LaBerge: Yes, and then you might also begin to ask some questions like why did the authors choose to develop their characters the way they did? What was Roald Dahl's purpose in using the limited-omniscient point of view, when he could just as easily have used one of the other points of view?

Raza: He wanted the reader to feel the growing level of suspense that he was building. That's why he chose the limited-omniscient point of view for this particular story. The reader knows what Billy is thinking and knows that he is unaware of the danger he's in.

Maria: And Colby Rodowsky chose the first person point of view to tell Amanda's story so the reader would be able to emphasize more with her and her situation.

Mr. LaBerge: Those are all excellent ideas, and they came about because you applied just two of the categories from the chart to the stories. Imagine what other ideas you'll come up with when you complete the chart. Not only will you have a greater understanding of the two stories, but the ideas you come up with could easily be used in an essay in which you compare aspects of the two stories.

In the next activity, you'll actually write a comparative essay in which you'll compare aspects of the novel you read with aspects of one or more of the other works of literature you've read.

Here's an example of a completed literature comparison chart for the stories "The Landlady" and "Amanda and the Wounded Birds." Study the information in each category.

	The Landlady	Amanda and the Wounded Birds
Narrative Point of View	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• limited omniscient	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• first person—major character
Character Presentation (methods used to reveal character)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• author uses direct presentation to reveal how characters look and act• readers see thoughts and feelings of Billy only• landlady's character revealed by her words and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• indirect presentation is most important• readers see thoughts and feeling of narrator• other characters revealed by what they say and do
Character Plausibility and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• both characters are clearly motivated and plausible• neither character undergoes a permanent change during the story• Billy's character—fairly well developed• the landlady's character— not well developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• characters are plausible and motivated• both major characters, Amanda and her mother, undergo change• Amanda's character— most fully developed
Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• conversational, honest
Symbolism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• no symbolism apparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• no symbolism apparent
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• independence? trust?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• honesty, communication, openness
Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• serious, mysterious, ominous, foreboding, suspenseful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• serious, reflective, frustrated, hopeful

1. Do you agree with the information presented in the preceding chart? Would you change any of this information or include additional facts or details? Write down the changes you would make and explain why they're necessary.

Refer to the comments in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.

2. In your notebook, draw a literature comparison chart like the one you've been working with. Now select two other short stories that you've read in this course that you think make for an interesting comparison. Insert their names at the top of the chart. Then, in point form, fill in the blank spaces.

For helpful suggestions, refer to the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.

A chart like the one you've constructed should help you see more clearly the similarities and contrasts between two works of fiction. This approach can be of great help when you're asked to compare and contrast aspects of two works of literature in an essay.

Another sort of comparison you should be able to do is one between characters in two or more works of literature—or within one work.

3. Pick **two** characters from different short stories you've studied so far in this course. Construct a chart like the one that follows and fill it in. Add to the chart as many categories of your own as you want.

	Character 1	Character 2
Overall Outlook on Life		
One Dilemma Faced		
One Decision Made		
Values (things most important to the characters)		
Strengths		
Weaknesses		

Compare your chart with the sample in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.

Remember, though, that when you're asked to convert information from these sorts of comparison charts into essay format, you must support every point you make with evidence taken from the stories being compared.

Evaluating Stories and Writers

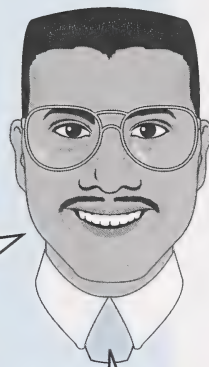
You've done a great deal of work in this module analysing works of fiction and their characters.

It's not really enough, however, to be able to explain how and why fiction writers achieve their purposes; you must also be able to present your views on **how well** they've done this task. In other words, you have to be able to evaluate their writing.



So, if I'm asked to evaluate a piece of writing, is that a personal-response or a critical-response type of question?

In a way it's a cross between the two. It's critical in that it involves a careful analysis of what a writer has done, but it's personal to the extent that you have to present your own views on how successful he or she has been.



So, in other words, we don't just talk about our own feelings about the piece—like whether we like it or not?

No. You still have to defend your conclusions with clear explanations and specific references to the work you're analysing.



Here, as an example, is one student's response to the question "How successful is the author of the story 'The Landlady' in creating believable characters?"

The author of the short story "The Landlady" has developed each of the two main characters, Billy and the landlady, enough to make them seem like real people. Many of the things the characters say and do are things that readers can observe in themselves and in the people they meet every day.

For example, Billy, who has left London and his family for the first time to establish a new life in a different town, is shown to be innocent and impressionable. Like many young people who still lack self-confidence, Billy imitates the behaviours of successful people he admires. This is shown, for example, when the narrator says "He was trying to do everything briskly these days. Briskness, he had decided, was the one common characteristic of all successful businessmen. The big shots up at Head Office were absolutely fantastically brisk all the time." Most readers would be reminded of their own adolescence and be able to identify with Billy's desire to look sophisticated and appear confident.

The landlady seems quite realistic in both of the ways in which she is portrayed. First she is shown as a kind, lonely, harmless woman with a few odd behaviours. She reminded me of one of my aunts who has lived alone for many years and shares some of the same habits that the landlady displays. I agreed with Billy's point of view of the landlady as shown in the lines "Now, the fact that his landlady appeared to be slightly off her rocker didn't worry Billy in the least. After all, she not only was harmless—there was no question about that—but she was also quite obviously a kind and generous soul."

However, like most people, there is more to the landlady than first meets the eye. The author gradually reveals that the landlady is actually a cold, calculating murderer. This realization shocked me, because like Billy, I was at first deceived by the landlady's outward appearance. One of the reasons she is able to deceive Billy and many readers is because she plans her murders down to the smallest detail—putting her victims at ease, so that they don't suspect anything. For example, even though she intends to poison Billy that same

evening, she asks him if he wanted to have an egg with breakfast, because that would affect what she would charge Billy for staying at her bed and breakfast. "Eggs are expensive at the moment. It would be sixpence less without the egg." Billy behaves in much the same way that any person—including the reader—might behave in a similar situation. He believes in the goodness in people and does not question the landlady's motives. It makes the reader think the same thing could happen to them because they see themselves as being very similar to Billy.

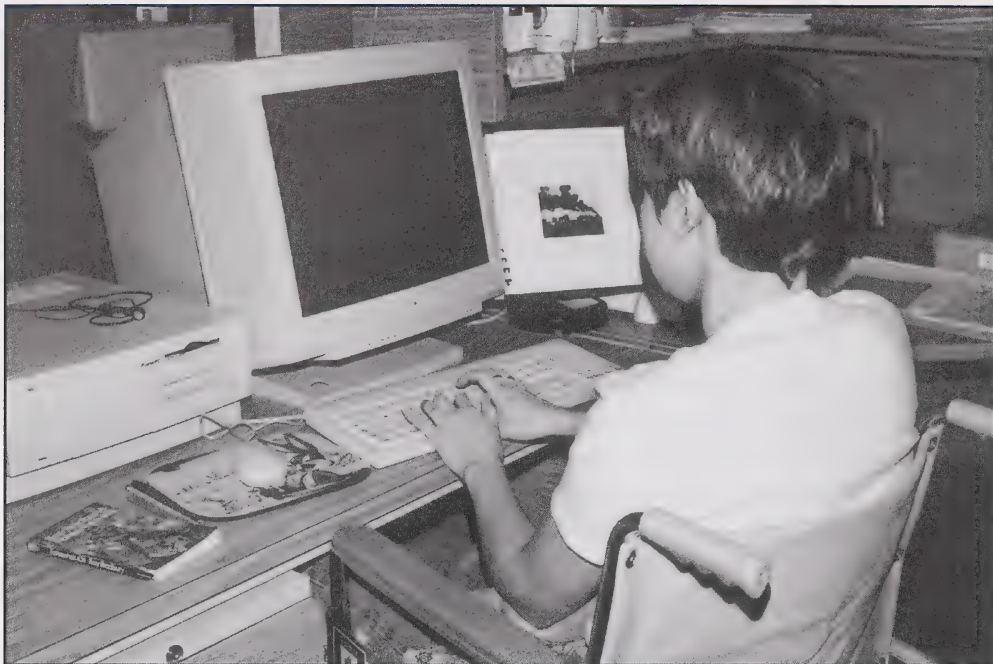
Another thing that I could identify with was the way in which Billy tries to remember where he had heard the names Mulholland and Temple. He is sure he had heard those names before and just can't stop thinking about it until he recalls the facts about them that he is sure are locked somewhere in his mind. The narrator describes that feeling in the following words: "There is nothing more tantalizing than a thing like this that lingers just outside the borders of one's memory. He hated to give up." I think everyone can identify with that feeling.

There was only one thing in the story that I couldn't quite believe—when Billy is hypnotized by the small sign into ringing the landlady's doorbell. "He was in the act of stepping back and turning away when all at once his eye was caught and held in the most peculiar manner by the small notice that was there . . . holding him, compelling him, forcing him to stay where he was and not to walk away from that house. . . ." That part just didn't work for me. The only thing that might explain such unusual behaviour would be a supernatural force, but this idea was not dealt with.

Aside from this incident, I found both characters believable.

In this activity, you learned that it's useful to create charts when comparing one work of literature with another. Comparing and contrasting aspects of different works of literature can help you develop a greater understanding of each work. As well, it's important that you become skilful at making such comparisons, because in any language arts course you take—including this one—you can expect to write essays in which you compare one work of literature with another. Activity 3 will show you how to write a critical essay in which you compare different works of literature you've studied in this course with the novel you've read.

Activity 3: A Comparative Essay



In the last activity, you completed charts in which you compared and contrasted aspects of two short stories. You then went on to do similar comparisons of characters from two short stories looking at such aspects of character as motivation, values, strengths, and weaknesses.

Being able to make comparisons in this way between two or more works of literature, and across different literary genres, is a skill language arts students need to develop. It's important to be able to think about a work of literature, analyse it, and then synthesize your ideas—that is, combine them with others—so you can see relationships that might at first not have been entirely obvious.

One of your Section 3 assignments will be to write a brief critical essay in which you compare some aspect of your novel with one or more other works of literature. For the remainder of this activity, you'll be working on this project. When you've finished it, that part of your assignment will be pretty-well done. All you'll need to do is revise, edit, and copy the final draft into the Assignment Booklet.

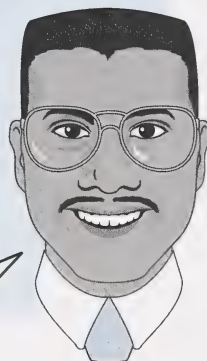
Because there's such a wide choice of novels, it's impossible to assign specific topics for this short essay; so the first thing you're going to have to do is come up with a thesis statement. That will involve thinking about aspects of your novel that you've found interesting, and then rereading works of literature you've studied in earlier modules that invite comparison in this area. Making charts like those you constructed in the last activity should help you organize your ideas.

If you need to review thesis statements, refer to Module 2, Section 3: Activity 2.



That's a tall order. I can usually write a decent essay when I've been given the topic, but coming up with a comparison out of the blue that way is going to be tricky.

Oh, I don't think you'll find it all that hard to get ideas once you get going, Marc. Remember to use prewriting strategies like clustering, brainstorming, and freewriting; they'll help get the creative juices flowing. The information and questions that follow should help, too.



Remember that the grounds for your comparison are wide open. It's up to you to decide how to tackle this essay. You can, for example, focus on the themes of two or more works in which you see grounds for comparison—or on underlying values. Or, you might compare and contrast two or more characters from different works, or two or more authors' methods of presenting their characters. You may want to discuss your ideas with your teacher or learning facilitator. You can do your planning and drafting either on your computer or in your journal.

1. Take the time now to formulate a thesis statement for your essay.
2. Now complete the prewriting process by generating the ideas you'll use in your essay. Organize them into a workable outline. Be sure to select appropriate details and examples from the literature that you'll be comparing.
3. At this point it's time to write the first draft of your essay. Be sure it has a clearly worded introduction, a unified and coherent body, and a conclusion that refers back to the main idea expressed in the introduction. If necessary, review the material in earlier modules—notably Module 2, Section 3 on how to structure an essay and Module 4, Section 4: Activity 5 on unity, coherence, and other things to look at during the revision stage.

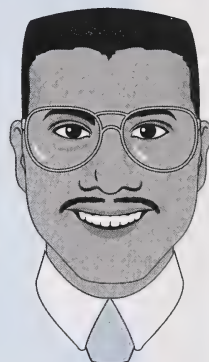


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I want to bring in some of the things I researched in Section 2 about the writer of my novel. I suppose if I do that I have to use footnotes and include a bibliography and all that stuff, don't I?

That's right, Suzanne. This assignment isn't intended as a research project, but if you do have material you'd like to incorporate, it's important that you do it correctly. In fact, whenever you quote directly from the works you're using, you should footnote them.



4. When you've finished the first draft of your essay, it's time for the revision process. Be sure to take all the time you need to revise (or rewrite?) your essay. After that, write out a clean copy to make editing easier. If you can, have another person read over your essay to help you spot errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. When your essay has been properly edited and proofread, you'll be ready to produce the final copy for your assignment.

For helpful comments, refer to the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.

Follow-up Activities



If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

Extra Help

Your comparative essay shouldn't give you much trouble. You already know how to write essays. If you need to refresh your memory, refer to Module 2, Section 3. You'll be comparing aspects of your novel with those in other works of fiction that you've read in this course. You can be certain that with all of the works of fiction you've read since the beginning of the course, at least a few of them will lend themselves to a comparison with your novel.

There are several aspects of your novel and another work of fiction that you could choose to compare and contrast in your essay. They are discussed in Section 2 as well as Activity 2 of Section 3. Some of the aspects you could compare between your novel and another work of fiction include the following things:

- how well the characters are developed
- motivation of the characters
- methods of character presentation
- characters' personality traits/outlook on life/strengths and weaknesses/response to conflicts
- values of the characters and/or values of the authors
- conflicts
- dilemmas
- plot
- themes
- style
- symbolism
- narrative point of view
- tone
- mood

For helpful suggestions about beginning your essay, refer to the Appendix, Section 3: Extra Help.



Enrichment

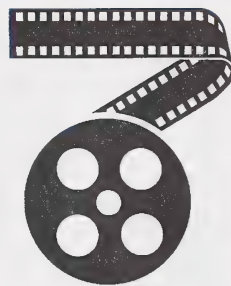
JOURNAL ENTRY B

In your journal write a creative response according to one of the following ideas.

1. Choose one or more characters from the novel and write two or three poems from their points of view. Your poems can deal with their feelings about specific events or situations in the novel or can simply comment on some aspect of life as they'd see it. The knowledge of poetry that you gained in Module 2 should come in handy if you opt for this idea; and it will give you good practice in adopting the personas of different characters.
2. Take an incident from the novel that the writer only referred to or left largely undeveloped and develop it yourself into a *500-word short story* that can stand on its own. Try, in your story, to match the novelist's tone and style and to keep characters consistent with their portrayals in the novel.
3. Write a series of letters or e-mail messages between two characters or one character's diary entries for the days on which significant events occurred. Be sure to stay in character and to see and explain things as that person (or those persons) would.
4. Imagine that at the end of the novel one character—not necessarily the protagonist unless this seems appropriate—is put on trial by the other characters. Put yourself first in the role of the prosecuting lawyer and write your final address to the jury; then do the same from the point of view of the lawyer for the defence. Finally, be the judge and jury and decide on the character's guilt or innocence. Be sure to explain your reasons.
5. Imagine that you're about to write and direct a movie version of the novel you've read. Now do the following:
 - a. Explain which professional actors you would hire to play the leading roles and why.
 - b. Choose an interesting scene from the book and explain how you would shoot it. In your explanation discuss such things as costuming, music, lighting, camera angles, and techniques. (Examples of these would be close-up, long shots, zoom-ins and zoom-outs, pans, high-angle shots, low-angle shots, and so on. See your librarian or a teacher knowledgeable about film production if necessary.)
 - c. Write a set of director's notes to the actors involved in one of the scenes explaining what you hope to accomplish in it—mood, tension, character development, conflict development, and so on.
6. If anything about the novel reminded you of a significant experience from your own life or the life of someone you know, recount that experience in the form of a brief short story. Try to bring the event and its significance to life. Don't just recount what occurred as if it were a factual report; try to make it an interesting story complete with dialogue, character development, conflict, and theme.
7. Write a creative response of your own choosing.



Feature films have been made of a number of the novels on the English 33 list. Check your local video outlet to see if you can find one for the novel you've read. If you do manage to get hold of a film version of your novel, watch it carefully and see what you think of the adaptation. As you watch, ask yourself questions like these:



- Who were the actors chosen to play the lead roles? Why do you suppose they were chosen? Did the interpretations of the characters reflect your own feelings about them?
- Do you feel that the director's vision of the novel was similar to the author's?
- A film must ordinarily omit a great deal from the novel on which it's based. What cuts were made? Would you have made different cuts?
- How did the film create transitions from one part of the book to the next?
- What techniques did the film use to compress the novel's time?
- Were concessions made to popular tastes so as to appeal to a wider audience; for example, were additional romances or unnecessary scenes of violence included?
- What scenes were added that had no dialogue? Why were they added?
- Was the mood and tone of the film similar to the mood and tone of the novel?
- Was the ending sugarcoated, or was it left essentially as the writer wanted it?
- Was the ending similar to the novel's ending? If it was different, explain why you think different choices were made.
- Do you feel that the director's ideas on the visual aspects of the movie were in keeping with the writer's intentions?
- Was music used? If so, what effects was it used to create?
- Were there any recurring themes throughout the movie? What purpose did they serve?
- Do you think that the movie conveyed the writer's theme satisfactorily, or did it offer a simplified or distorted message about life?



Conclusion

In this section you've extended the work you've been doing with your novel to include a revisitation of the early chapters, a major personal response, and a comparative essay. If you've done this work, your Section 3 Assignment should pretty much take care of itself.

Assignment
Booklet

ASSIGNMENT

In your Assignment Booklet complete the assignments for this section.

MODULE SUMMARY


And that's it—the end of Module 6 and the end of the assigned literature for English 33. There's only one more module to go. In Module 7 you'll be developing your skills in the art of persuasion, and preparing for your final test and diploma exam. It's a module with a practical slant, and one you should find very useful. But while practicality certainly has its place in life, so too do aesthetic pleasure and intellectual stimulation; so keep reading those novels!

Assignment
Booklet

FINAL MODULE ASSIGNMENT

In your Assignment Booklet complete the final module assignments.

Appendix

	Glossary
	Suggested Answers

Glossary

allusion: in literature, a reference to someone or something with which the writer assumes the audience will be familiar

character presentation: the way in which an author reveals the personality of the characters

Also known as character development or characterization. See also **direct presentation of character** and **indirect presentation of character**.

direct presentation of character: a method of revealing characters' personalities by directly telling readers

See also **character representation**.

indirect presentation of character: a method of revealing characters' personalities through what they say, think, and do

See also **character presentation**.

literary symbol: any character, object, situation, action, or event that has a second meaning in addition to its literal meaning in a work of literature

See also **symbol** and **symbolism**.

milieu: the surrounding circumstances in which something occurs, or the environment in which someone lives

motive: the reason behind an action or decision

symbol: something that stands for something else; an object, person, or event that has a meaning greater than its literal meaning

See also **symbolism** and **literary symbol**.

symbolism: the use of symbols in literature; the use of signs or **symbols** to represent abstract ideas such as opportunity, life, death, freedom, happiness, love, hope, and so on

See also **symbol** and **literary symbol**.

verisimilitude: the quality of seeming realistic—of appearing to be true and plausible

Suggested Answers

Because of the wide selection of novels offered in this course, suggested answers to questions that are specific to the novel you are studying cannot be supplied. Therefore, most of the “answers” that follow will be of a general nature.

Section 1: Activity 1

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

Section 1: Activity 2

1. This question may be very easy to answer or rather complex, depending on the novel you're reading. Some novels can be confusing at first, but things generally sort themselves out later on.
2. Be sure in answering this question that you take into account not only time and place, but also the situation.
3.
 - a. It's important to get a good grip on the characters in a novel early on. Some novels can introduce readers to so complex a cast in the opening chapters that serious readers often find themselves forced to draw up lists of names. Make sure you get the characters and their relationships sorted out before moving on.
 - b. It may not be clear at this stage who the protagonist is. You might, for example, assume that the narrator is telling his or her own story, only to discover later that this narrator is but a minor character recounting events that chiefly concern someone else.

4. a. If you're rusty on narrative point of view, go back and reread the discussion in Module 4, Section 1: Activity 2.
b. The benefits of using the different points of view—and their limitations—are discussed in Module 4, Section 1. Apply this material to the specific novel you're reading.
5. Don't worry if it's not yet apparent just what the major conflict will be. Remember that novels are lengthy and often very complex works with numerous conflicts. It can be instructive, though, to predict from the opening chapter(s) just how conflicts will develop. Doing this well can require well-developed inference-making skills.
6. Because they're long and complex works of fiction, novels can evoke a variety of moods. However, it's important that novelists hit just the right note at the start of their works because it's here that the initial impression is made on readers. Return to your response to this question when you've finished the book and see if the mood as you perceived it in the early chapters is continued throughout the novel.
7. a. Remember in describing a fictional world to go beyond time, place, and situation. Describe, as well, any interesting and noteworthy qualities of that world. For example, the world into which Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* invites readers is one where the government controls the citizens through fear, propaganda, brainwashing, and the suppression of ideas.
b. It's important that writers entice readers into their worlds early in the novel or many readers simply won't make the effort necessary to get involved. To lure readers on, does the writer of your novel offer an exciting event, intriguing hints of things to come, or fascinating descriptions? Are readers thrown right into the middle of the action, or are they drawn in more subtly? Does the novel perhaps begin in the present and then use a flashback to describe earlier events?
c. Be honest here. If you find the fictional world unbelievable—or simply not very interesting—say so. But be sure to give solid reasons for your response.
8. Responses should be personal. Return later to what you wrote here to see if your questions were answered and your predictions borne out.

Section 1: Activity 3

1. Remember that key quotations are passages that have something important to say to the reader about one or more of the characters, the theme(s), or some other aspect of a work of literature. When you read a key quotation, a little (or not-so-little) light should flash on in your head and you should think "Aha! I understand it better now!"
2. You've done a good deal of work on making inferences throughout this course, but this is the first time you've been asked to come up with your own passages from which the writer expects the reader to draw inferences. If you have a reading partner, discuss the inferences your partner draws from your passages and vice versa.
3. Be sure to use specific references to the novel in responding to this question. Be critical; don't just accept the behaviour of characters. Always ask yourself if this is the way real people would actually behave in this sort of situation.
4. *Interesting wordings* is a very broad category; it leaves it pretty well up to you to decide on what qualifies. Look for such things as colourful descriptive phrases, lively snippets of dialogue, and unusual word choices and juxtapositions that had an unusually strong impact on you when you first read them. Be sure to explain what it is about each one that makes it stand out for you.
5. Note the word *central*; most novels have a number of conflicts going on at different levels and involving a variety of characters, as befits a lengthy work that tries to be faithful to the richness of human life and relationships. In most novels written to reveal a truth about life or human nature, the central conflict is likely to be something more complex than the person-versus-person or person-versus-environment type offered up by most adventure novels. Look, above all, for internal conflicts, even when more obvious external ones strike you first.

6. If you found any parts of your novel confusing, discuss these parts with another person who is reading the same novel or check with your teacher or learning facilitator. If you are still confused, just continue reading. Your questions may be answered later in the book.

Section 1: Activity 4

1. If your predictions were all borne out, it means one of two things: either you're an unusually accomplished active reader or the novel you're reading is just a formula-written adventure story. Because none of the English 33 novels fall into this category, if you predicted future developments with some accuracy, you're to be congratulated. But don't worry if your predictions were off the mark; it probably just means you're reading a creative work of literature that is meant to reveal a truth about life. Still, your predicting skills should improve the more you read.
2. Again, if the ending of a work of fiction is predictable, it's likely that the work is formula written. But be aware that some writers of this sort of fiction will throw in surprise endings just to confound readers' expectations. The test should be whether or not the ending is true to life and fairly achieved. An ending intended only to surprise readers and which reveals little about life has few merits. Similarly, an ending designed just to make readers feel good and remain secure in their cosy beliefs about life won't be found in a work of literature that is intended to reveal an insight into life or human nature.
3. a. Responses will vary. For example, if you read Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, you probably discovered that it contains many literary allusions. Books are being burned in this novel, and the writer alludes to many specific book titles as the books are being burned. In the novel's later stages, various people represent specific books, which are mentioned through the technique of allusion.

Most likely you were able to clarify many allusions in your novel with the help of context clues. It's also a good idea to discuss your ideas with another reader who has read the same novel. If you didn't notice any allusions in your novel, don't be too concerned. While some novels may contain several allusions, others may have none at all. And besides, in a work the size of a novel, missing some or all of the allusions rarely affects your understanding or enjoyment of the story.

- b. If context clues fail, there are reference works such as encyclopedias and dictionaries to fall back on. In some cases history texts might help. Your librarian should be able to direct you to other sources, and of course you can always ask people who would be likely to better understand the allusions than you do.
- c. Were you at all successful? Don't forget to talk to your reading partner and/or teacher if necessary.
4. Many works of literature contain a good deal of irony, though sometimes it doesn't become apparent until late in the book (this, of course, is true by definition in the case of situational irony). But this irony may be subtle and require careful reading as well as an ability to draw inferences on the part of the reader; yet it can be vital that you pick up on it if you're to understand what the writer wants you to understand. If you didn't notice any ironic elements in your novel, think back carefully and discuss the matter with your reading partner, teacher, or learning facilitator.
5. Keep your list of questions that you can't resolve at this stage. It may come in handy later if you get a chance to discuss the novel with another reader or if you reread the novel in the future.

Section 1: Follow-up Activities

Extra Help

1. There is no correct way or wrong way to write a book review. Here are some general guidelines:
 - Give your book review a short, creative title.
 - Mention the title, author, and publisher of the book you're reviewing.
 - Use essay format.
 - Begin a new paragraph for each new idea.
 - Use appropriate transitional words when you move from one point or idea to the next.

- Say what the book is about, but don't give away the whole plot.
 - Tell readers as much as they need to know to be able to make an informed decision about whether or not to read the book.
 - You may present your own opinions about the book, but the main focus should be on providing information.
 - Try to present the strengths and weaknesses of the book fairly.
 - You can discuss the novel using any of the literary terminology you've learned in this or previous language arts courses, such as theme, plot, character, conflict, motivation, imagery, symbolism, diction, style, and so on. You don't need to discuss everything; focus just on those aspects that either work really well or that you think are not well done.
 - Defend and explain your point of view. Use examples from the novel when necessary.
 - You may want to do some research on the writer's background and include information that helps explain the background of the novel and the writer's purpose.
2. a. Do your questions address issues that you find difficult? Would they get students thinking about issues you believe are central to the novel's purpose? Are they structured clearly?
 - b. You may, of course, find that answering your questions is a very difficult task; after all, at least some of them address aspects of the novel you yourself find difficult. The process of formulating and trying to answer the questions should, however, have focused your thinking and perhaps improved your comprehension. If you have a reading partner, discuss each other's questions together.
 3. If you find that more than one of the novels suits your taste in literature, go to the library and read a few pages from each of the novels that interests you. This way you can see which writer's style you prefer and how much difficulty you have with the diction. Read some bits of the dialogue at random throughout the book and see whether the language used by some of the characters offends you. Remember, in creating believable characters, writers will have their character speak in a manner that is consistent with their level of education, their socioeconomic status, their culture or subculture, and the situation they find themselves in. Characters may talk about sensitive or controversial topics and may use language that you personally find offensive. In addition, some of the situations that the characters find themselves in are in themselves quite disturbing—perhaps because of the realistic way in which they are handled in the story. Novels depicting the horrors of war, destructive or violent relationships, or the disintegration of society may force sensitive readers to reconsider their choice of novels.

If you find things in your novel that disturb you greatly, maybe you should consider choosing a different novel. On the other hand, a novel that shocks you and challenges your attitudes, beliefs, and values can expand your knowledge of the world, human nature, and ultimately yourself.

Enrichment

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

Section 2: Activity 1

Remember, there are several ways in which characters can be revealed in a work of fiction such as a short story or novel.

Readers can learn what a character is like from

- what the narrator tells the reader directly about the character (direct presentation)
- what the character says (indirect presentation)

- what the character thinks or feels (indirect presentation)
- what the character does (indirect presentation)
- what another character says or thinks about the character (indirect presentation)
- how another character behaves or reacts in response to the character (indirect presentation)

In most stories, the characters are revealed using more than one method of presentation. In most of the short stories you read in this course, the narrator is also a character in the story. Because of this fact, the presentation of the characters in most of the short stories has been largely indirect rather than direct. It is important to note that you won't always find examples of each method of character presentation in a work of fiction. The methods by which a character is presented depends on which character you are interested in. The narrative point of view has a great deal to do with how characters are presented. For example, an omniscient narrator can express the thoughts and feelings of all of the characters, while a limited-omniscient narrator or a first person narrator can reveal the thoughts and feelings of just one character.

The following chart is an example of a presentation.

Presentation of Amanda's Mother in "Amanda and the Wounded Birds"		
Method	Example	What Is Revealed
• what the narrator tells the reader directly about the character	"Mom really cared about the people who telephoned her. . ."	Amanda's mother cares about other people and tries to help them.
• what the character says	"I hope my wounded bird with the abusive husband will get herself into counseling"	Amanda's mother thinks about the people who called even after she is off the air.
• what the character thinks or feels	(The thoughts and feelings of Amanda's mother are not revealed.)	N/A
• what the character does	She met Amanda for lunch to talk, and talked with her " . . . all afternoon, until the light streaking in the windows changed from yellow to a deep, burning gold and the busboys started setting the tables for dinner."	Amanda's mother cares enough about her daughter's needs to cancel all of her other plans and spends the time necessary to strengthen their relationship. Amanda is the most important person in her life.
• what another character says or thinks about the character	(In this story, the narrator is one of the other characters—Amanda. It is difficult to separate the words, thoughts, and feelings of the narrator from those of the character whom the narrator portrays in the story.)	N/A
• how another character behaves or reacts in response to the character	Amanda telephones her mother on the open-line radio show.	Amanda's mother is so busy that she can't see how little time she devotes to her daughter.

Section 2: Activity 2

1. a. and b. Ask yourself what can be learned by watching this character in action. What qualities does this character have that would make him or her stand out in a crowd? What strengths does the character possess? What weaknesses?
2. Responses will vary, but the questions listed below the principal question should guide your analysis. Remember that while the rugged hero and lovely heroine are very attractive characters in fiction, they aren't at all realistic. Plausible characters must be realistic human beings complete with strengths and flaws. Such characters must exhibit consistent behaviour that can be explained by referring to their personality traits and the situations in which they find themselves.

Did you refer to specific instances in your novel to illustrate your points?

3. Did you ask yourself to what degree the writer of your novel relies on the three methods of indirect characterization: (what characters say, what they do, what they think and feel)?

When considering direct methods of characterization used in your novel, did you note how much of it is accomplished through observations made by other characters and how much relies on direct comments made by an omniscient narrator? If other characters' observations are involved, did you consider any biases or inadequacies that would make their comments unreliable?

Did you refer to specific examples of characterization in your novel?

4. Did you find that this question forced you to see parallels you hadn't thought of before? Often the most interesting comparisons can be drawn between characters who on first glance seem very different. Is this true of your experience?
5.
 - a. person versus self
 - b. person versus environment
 - c. person versus person
6. a., b., and c. Most novels, being lengthy and relatively complex works, have a variety of conflicts involving several different characters; but inevitably one of these will be the predominant conflict. You may find that while it's quite easy to understand your novel's central conflict, it isn't so easy to classify it. As in real life, the conflicts in novels can be messy things with internal and external aspects, though normally in novels that provide an insight about life it's the internal qualities that make for the greatest interest. The most important thing is that you understand the conflicts faced by the characters in your chosen book and appreciate them in the fullness of their complexities.

Section 2: Activity 3

1. Responses will vary. Some novels are much more complex than others; but if you dig into any novel that has a theme—a message about life—you should be able to discover that it has things to say about a variety of subjects relating to human nature and human existence.
2. This is a rather more difficult question than the preceding one. Often a work of fiction will explore areas of human life to reveal their complexities rather than to make precise statements about them. After all, nice, neat comments tend to oversimplify reality rather than to illuminate it. Still, it's worthwhile to try to state what your writer's ideas are even if it's for no other reason than to force yourself to think about them seriously. Often you'll be surprised at how doing this will clarify for you what a writer wants to say.
3. Again, a novel can be so complex that expressing its theme is often no easy task. Don't worry if it takes you a paragraph or two, and even then you may well feel that your formulation of your novel's theme is entirely inadequate. On the other hand, you may find that your novel's theme is very easy to express. Either way, the important thing is that you try your best to understand what it is the writer hoped his or her readers would take away from their reading of the novel.

4. Sometimes evaluating the theme of a work of literature can be an even more difficult task than expressing it. A well-crafted novel can give the impression of being faithful to the way things really are while in fact exaggerating and distorting reality. Writers may want so badly to create an impressive effect that they end up sacrificing reality in the process, and it's up to readers to be alert to such distortions and to judge a novel's theme accordingly. But remember, even a work of literature that exaggerates may have something true and important to say; so try to evaluate your novel's ideas fairly and thoughtfully.
5. Focusing in on an important decision or action at a key moment in a novel can help you understand just what makes a character "tick." Do you feel you understand the protagonist of your novel any better now?
6. Most novels have a variety of characters who are developed quite fully, in which case this question's task will be a relatively easy one. Some novels, though, will have a limited cast; if you've read such a novel, do your best with this question.
7. Characters who experience change are called *dynamic* characters. In a novel, unlike a short story, it's often possible to have several dynamic characters. Were you able to explain both how and why any changes in values occurred?
8. In answering this question, think back to your response to question 4; after all, writers' values should be reflected in the themes of their works. And remember, in any work of interpretive fiction the protagonist may or may not share the writer's own values.
9. This response will be personal. Be on guard against the persuasive powers of skilful writers; as mentioned earlier, they may distort reality somewhat and portray things in a light that makes their ideas seem, perhaps, more plausible than they really are. On the other hand, try to keep an open mind, and be willing to question your own values. A willingness to re-evaluate your own attitudes and opinions in the light of new ideas is one important characteristic of an active, thoughtful reader.
10. Depending on the novel you've read, you may find an enormous amount of information about the author or very little. Did you find that what you learned cast some light on your understanding of the novel? As you've read in Section 1: Activity 1, knowing something about the milieu out of which any work of art arose can help you understand it better.

Section 2: Activity 4

1. Responses will vary. Here are just a few things that could be symbols in your life:
 - sports team emblems or crests
 - a company logo
 - religious icons and ceremonies
 - mascots
2. Responses will vary. Discuss your ideas with others who have seen the movies.
3. You may have found this a difficult question. If you didn't note any symbols in your novel, it could mean simply that the writer didn't use this literary device. Many novels in the English 33 list do, however, contain symbolic references. This is something to discuss with your reading partner or learning facilitator.

Section 2: Follow-up Activities

Extra Help

1. Being able to articulate what a literary work says about a variety of thematic topics is a skill you'll likely be called upon to use in your examinations. If it's something that gives you problems, practise doing it with other works you've read. If you can, discuss your ideas with a study partner.
2.
 - a. "Run"—The conflict is person versus environment. Peter finds life at home intolerable. As a result he leaves home to try to establish a better life for himself.
 - b. "Marriage Is a Private Affair"—The conflict is person versus person. Nnaemeka is in conflict with his father because of his decision to marry the woman of his choosing.
 - c. "Flowers for Weddings and Funerals"—The conflict is person versus herself. The narrator is torn between her friendship with Laurence and her relationship with Omah.
3.
 - a. She says, the tree "looked like Paul Bunyan's arms raised in Halleluyah against the sky."
 - b. The tree looked alone and helpless as revealed by the following words: "... the moon shone mercilessly down on the cottonwood tree, on its shivering, naked, up-reaching arms."
 - c. When Graham kissed her, she felt great joy and exhilaration. She felt like she was on top of the world. When Neil kissed her, she felt cold, empty, and vulnerable.
 - d. The cottonwood tree is a symbol for Lulie. How Lulie sees the tree reveals to the reader what she feels. Through comparing the two different ways in which the cottonwood tree is described, the reader knows that Lulie does not love Neil. It's likely she will measure every new relationship against the one she had with Graham.

Enrichment

1. This question simply asks you to formulate, or express, the novel's central theme or themes. What ideas about life does the writer wish to communicate?
2. What narrative point of view is used? (Review Module 4, Section 1: Activity 2 if you aren't sure.) Why would the writer have opted for this perspective? What are its advantages? How do these advantages relate to what the writer hopes to accomplish? If a first-person perspective has been used, how reliable is the narrator? What inferences are readers expected to make? Was an objective point of view used? If so, why?
3. What is the principal conflict? How does it help develop and communicate the novel's central ideas? Does it do a good job? Does it help focus readers' minds on the theme, or does it distract them from it?
4. Why have the characters been developed this way? What do they contribute to conveying the novel's unifying concept? Do they do what the writer hoped they would? Are they believable and interesting people?
5. Why did the writer place the novel where and when he or she did? Would another setting have been less effective? What features of the setting make it particularly appropriate?
6. Is the style of the novel one that aids in communicating its theme? Or does it interfere with the communication process, obscure the writer's meanings, and discourage reading? Does it help establish an appropriate mood, or is the feeling it creates at odds with the book's purpose? Were you able to cite examples to support your contentions?
7. Is the tone adopted by the writer appropriate for achieving the intended purpose? What about the novel's pervading mood? If the message was meant to be inspiring, is the mood of the book uplifting, or does it become ponderous and stodgy? Is the tone at all ironic? If so, does this element of irony aid in impressing the writer's ideas on his or her audience?

8. Note your novel's principal symbols (if indeed, there are any). What do they represent? What ideas do they reinforce? What ideas do they convey?

Section 3: Activity 1

1. Knowing what comes later allows you to understand many things presented near a novel's beginning that likely went right by you the first time. A well-crafted novel will generally contain a great deal of material near the beginning that can be appreciated only when readers come back to it later, either by rereading or recalling it. Serious novelists expect their readers to do more than simply whip through their writings once. To fully appreciate a good novel, a reader has to do much more than read it through one time.
2. Many novels contain in their early chapters some foreshadowing of things to come—future conflicts and events, along, perhaps, with ways in which characters will develop as the story progresses. Good readers will often pick up on foreshadowing and use it to predict the course of future events. Often, of course, foreshadowing becomes apparent only later; then readers can think back and see how the writer was preparing them for certain events all along.
3. a. and b. Usually symbols reveal themselves only later on in a novel; after all, it's normally only when something is alluded to several times that its symbolic meaning becomes apparent. Going back and taking a second look at the early chapters in a novel should help you trace the development of symbols right through a novel. This should also help make their significance clearer.

Section 3: Activity 2

1. The information in the chart is accurate. There is, however, some room for different interpretations and different choice of words. As well, additional details could be included for most of the categories. If you think that some important information has been overlooked, discuss your ideas with a partner, in a group, or with your teacher or learning facilitator.
2. Responses will vary. If possible, compare the ideas in your chart with those of a partner or group that has compared the same stories. If you're not sure if your responses are appropriate, discuss your ideas with your teacher or learning facilitator.



3. Charts will vary. Here is an example. Do you agree with the information presented here?

	Peter from “Run”	Okeke from “Marriage Is a Private Affair”
Overall Outlook on Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• longs for change in his life• feels trapped and resentful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• believes everything would be okay if only his son would just obey his wishes• Everything is clearly either black or white, good or bad, right or wrong; there is no middle ground.
One Dilemma Faced	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stay at home and continue to endure the lack of control he has over his life and the shame brought on the family by his sister versus leaving the reserve and trying to make it on his own	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• disown his son for marrying against his wishes or accept his son’s decision• refuse to see his daughter-in-law and grandsons or break with tradition and establish a bond with his son’s family
One Decision Made	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• runs away from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• refuses to communicate with his son and his family
Values (things most important to the characters)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• self-respect• work, earning a living• morality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tradition• religion• parental authority
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• determination• the memory of his father and his values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• willingness (eventually) to acknowledge his mistakes• ability to push disturbing thoughts to the back of his mind
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• self-doubt• weakening resolve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• inability to see other points of view• stubbornness

Section 3: Activity 3

1., 2., 3., and 4. Naturally, there can be no suggested answers for these questions. If you’re having trouble generating ideas or coming up with a thesis statement, spend some time going over some of the literature you read earlier in the course and complete charts like those you did in Activity 3. Be sure to refer to your handbook and a dictionary if necessary when editing your essay.

Section 3: Follow-up Activities

Extra Help

It would be a good idea to begin planning this essay by creating a few charts like those you examined in Section 2: Activities 1 and 2 as well as in Section 3: Activity 2. In this way, you can easily see the similarities and differences between the various aspects of your novel and other works. Which of these aspects you choose to discuss in your comparative essay is up to you. If you need help in choosing a suitable topic or narrowing the focus, talk to your teacher or learning facilitator.

Enrichment

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

